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SERMONS

ON

VARIOUS SUBJECTS,

BY

REV. THOMAS A. MORRIS,
ONE OF THE BISHOPS OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

"And I will give you pastors according to my heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding," Jeremiah iii, 15.

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PREFACE.

SEVERAL considerations have induced me to consent to the publication of these Sermons. The want of a small volume of instructive discourses on various religious subjects, suited in matter, manner, and cost to our people, and especially in the west, has long been felt by them, particularly as we have no such work on the Catalogue of Books printed and sold at our Book Concern. The Methodist Episcopal Church abounds in periodicals, biography, and history, but not in sermons of her own authorship. Perhaps one reason of this is, Mr. Wesley's Sermons are supposed by many to supersede the necessity of all others among us. I am perfectly free to admit, they are the best ever written, or that probably ever will be written; still that work is too voluminous and costly to meet the case of those for whom this is more especially designed. Besides, it is not clear to my mind, that all the sermons made in America, having a special adaptation to the state of society here, should die with their authors, without ever appearing in print, merely because superior ones for general purposes have been imported. There are in all communities some peculiarities, which are best understood by the ministers who serve them. The Book Committee at Cincinnati, including the Editors, have several times, officially, requested the preparation of such a work as this is designed to be, while the Agents of that Concern, and other brethren in the west, have, for years, kindly encouraged the undertaking; and, hence, hoping it might do some good, I finally, though with much fear and trembling, consented to make the attempt.

In the selection of subjects, while variety has not been neglected, as the work will show, usefulness has been the prominent object at which I aimed. As far as any distinguishing doctrinal views appear in these discourses, they will be found to accord, substantially, with the standard works of our Church; though but little reference is made to any book except the Bible, and from that quotations are numerous, and, I trust, appropriate. The plan of the Sermons is quite plain; in most cases only the general divisions are announced, and the formality of numbering the subdivisions, by prefixing figures, is generally dispensed with. In regard to style, I have endeavored in writing, as in preaching, to observe plainness of speech, omitting as far as practicable all difficult and unusual words, and adhering as nearly as convenient to Scripture phraseology. How far I have succeeded, or failed, in accomplishing these objects, let those determine who feel sufficient interest to examine for themselves. The publication of the work is an experiment; and its success will depend on the blessing of God, to whose care and favor it is now commended, in the name of Jesus. May he make these Sermons the means of instruction and consolation to thousands of souls, after the author of them shall have gone "the way of all the earth!" Amen.

THOMAS A. MORRIS.

Cincinnati, July, 1841.

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SERMONS.

SERMON I.

EARLY PIETY.

"Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them," Ecclesiastes xii, 1.

The history of Solomon, who is the supposed author of these words, is a valuable comment on the vanity of all human grandeur. Having resorted to wealth and power, learning and public achievements, wine and pleasure, feasting and mirth, in pursuit of happiness, he pronounced them all to be "vanity and vexation of spirit." After this, he shows the whole duty and true felicity of man; the sum of which is, to fear God and keep his commandments, which he sets forth in these words: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."

As the best means of shunning that vanity, and obtaining this felicity, he recommends *early piety*, saying, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth." Believing, as we do, that it is still the best safe-guard to the morals, reputation, manners, present and future prospects of the youth of our country, we are not ashamed to imitate, in our feeble way, the example of the wise man; and, therefore, have chosen this text with reference to their spiritual

good. We shall notice its more important parts under the following divisions:—

I. What is implied in remembering our Creator.

II. The time when that work should be done.

III. The arguments in favor of that time.

I. *To remember*, as the term is used here, is not barely to retain in, or recall to the mind, the knowledge previously possessed of God; but it is to be mindful of, and to observe our high obligations to him. God is said to remember the wicked when he punishes them for sin, and to remember the righteous when he rewards them for their labor of love. We are glad that it is written, "The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance." So we are said to remember him, when we render him that homage which is his just due as our Creator, Preserver, Benefactor, Redeemer, Savior, Governor, and Judge.

God is worthy of being remembered by us all with *esteem:* mark his perfections, "Glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders" amongst men; and with *gratitude*, on account of his mercies. To him we owe our lives and all the blessings which render them tolerable unto us in such a world as this; our redemption through the Son of his love, and all the blessings of the covenant of grace, whether in possession or in prospect. Also, with *obedience.* Observe his authority, who is the Maker of our frames, the Father of our spirits, and the Sovereign of the universe: all his perfections are wonderful, "but the thunder of his power, who can understand?"

To sum up all briefly, we *remember our Creator*, in the sense of our text, only when we love him with the whole heart; render an entire obedience to the whole economy of the Gospel of Christ, and dedicate unto him, without reserve, our time and talents, strength and substance, souls and bodies, with all we have and all we are, which is our reasonable service.

II. The time when this work should be done, according to the text, is, *in the days of youth.* At what particular time children arrive at the knowledge of good and evil, and become accountable to God for their conduct, must depend on a variety of circumstances, such as their natural capacities, the privileges they enjoy, the instructions afforded them, the examples set before them by parents, &c.; consequently, some pass the line of accountability much sooner than others. But one thing is certain, namely, whenever we are sufficiently advanced in years and knowledge to sin against the Lord knowingly, we are then old enough, and know enough, to repent or perish. O how precious are the days of youth! They form the period in which most of those habits are formed which accompany us through life, and have an influence on our everlasting destinies. How useful might they be if well spent in treasuring up the lessons of wisdom, and laying the foundation of future usefulness and happiness? But who thinks of these things in due season? Did you ever observe how simple are the plays of children, how cruel the sports of boys, and how empty and vain the conversation of young people in general? Suppose a dozen of fashionable young people collected to spend a social evening, and an invisible agent employed to take down their conversation, directed by the impulse of their own minds, and according to their own fancies; and suppose that they should presently, after retiring, read it in print, would they not be ashamed of such authorship? Not, however, for the want of better understanding, or better opportunities in life, but for want of more seriousness. But happy are those youths, who, obeying the Spirit's call, retire from these gay circles, and take themselves to prayer, reading the Bible, and sober reflection; for God says, "I love them that love me: and they that seek me early shall find me."

While the evil days come not, or delay their coming; for

they are sure to come, sooner or later. Yes, young and hale, gay and prosperous, as you now are, scenes of affliction and woe will overtake you. Whether we shall be rich or poor, honorable or dishonorable, who can tell? But that we shall have affliction and death, is beyond all doubt. Some of us may yet be doomed to the most abject poverty, or thrown among the out-casts of society; we may be encountered by furious enemies, or betrayed by treacherous friends; we may yet writhe under the sting of disappointed ambition, or wither under blasted hopes; we may follow our dearest friends and relatives to the tomb, and be left as friendless orphans to seek bread for ourselves, without any one to direct us in the paths of virtue and piety; we may linger for years under some wasting pulmonary or chronic disease, and will certainly "die and go the way of all the earth." Hence the importance of early piety; for if we remember our Creator while the evil days delay their coming, we shall have him for our "strong hold" in all those scenes of affliction and trouble; but if not, then we must bear them all ourselves, with the addition of an accusing conscience, and an awful sense of "the wrath to come."

Nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them. Without the friendship of God, the seasons of age and affliction will afford us no pleasure, ourselves being judges. Then all our youthful sports, in which we now delight, will be sickening vanity unto us. Nor will we take pleasure in the recollection of former scenes, except those of virtue and piety. What pleasure will it afford us when we are old, or sick and dying, to remember the companions of our youth, who helped to make our evenings cheerful, some of whom will be settled in distant countries, some dead, and all dispersed, while we shall be left alone, or with a new race of people? What pleasure shall we then have from the remembrance of time,

precious time, which we have squandered away by doing nothing, yea worse than nothing, even to a criminal neglect of our eternal interests? Or what pleasure shall we derive, in the sad days of adversity, from the recollection of all the balls and parties, races and carousals, where we have figured in the circles of folly? Alas, none but the few moments employed in the service of God, will then afford any pleasant reflections. Complaints about long Sabbaths, long sermons, many prayers, and noisy zeal, will then be exchanged for self-reproaches, bitter cries, and loud lamentations. We hasten to notice,

III. The arguments in favor of *remembering our Creator in the days of youth*, in preference to any other time. It is the most *convenient time*, which appears, partly, from the nature of our employments; for young people, in general, have much more leisure than others. Though they may do as much settled business, their intermediate moments are not taken up with numerous cares like those of others, who are heads of families, masters of shops, or such as have professional duties to perform; and, consequently, they have a better opportunity to mind the concerns of religion.

Young people, too, generally have better health than old people. Indeed, this is one of Solomon's principal arguments in favor of early piety, which he exhorts us to embrace before age and infirmity, of which he gives a striking picture in this chapter, prevent us. To feel the force of this argument, we have only to recollect, that while we come now to the house of God, and enjoy its sacred pleasures, the aged and infirm are confined at home, and tortured with numerous pains, beside the unhappiness of being deprived of the privileges in which we now participate.

The mind is so constructed, that our first impressions are the strongest and most lasting. Of this truth the

memory affords a specimen. An old gentleman recollects distinctly, and relates circumstantially, the events of early life, while those of later date are very soon forgotten; and what is true of his memory, is also true of his other faculties. Of course, his facilities for learning truth, and forming a saving acquaintance with Christ, are greatly lessened. In the morning of life, while the mind is vigorous, is the better time to enter as disciples in the Gospel school.

The force of habit is another argument. It is well known that habits long continued are exceedingly difficult to change, especially bad habits. Ask the man long confirmed in habits of dissipation if this is true, and he will tell you, "Once I might have reformed, and would not: now I would reform, but cannot." Suppose a man, long confirmed in habits of irreligion, determines now to change his manner of life, how very difficult the undertaking? "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil." Here, Jeremiah designs to show, not the impossibility, but the great difficulty of changing the long continued habits of wicked men; from all which appears the importance of becoming pious while we are young, before our impious habits are confirmed, while our hearts are tender, our affections glowing, and we are susceptible of deep and lasting impressions.

Christian experience affords another strong argument in favor of our doctrine. When do we usually receive our strongest religious impressions? Generally when we are young; and those who yield to them at first, soon receive the knowledge of God unto salvation, but those who resist them grow harder, as a natural consequence, and become less and less affected by them, until they finally cease to feel entirely. Hence so many more young people get converted than old ones; hence, also, our encouragement

to address the youth. If the hearts of older sinners resist the precepts of the Gospel, still the younger and more tender heart may yield to their heavenly influences.

The shortness of time sustains our position. The sooner we commence, the less we have to repent of, and the longer time to repent in; whereas, the longer we put off repentance, the more we have to repent of, and the shorter time to do it in. These, and many other arguments, show, that in the days of youth we have the most convenient time to remember our Creator; and those who are waiting for their difficulties to subside, are only adding to them daily.

In the morning of life is the surest time of success. If we deliberately set out in the great work of salvation when we are young, and healthful, and have the ordinary prospects of living, then we have no occasion to doubt our own sincerity; but if we never begin until we are old, or afflicted, and think we are about to die, we will have reason to fear that our repentance arises only from the fear of death and hell. We would not say, however, that all death-bed conversions are delusions, lest we should limit the mercy of God. Nor would we say, that in general, they are genuine, lest we should say peace and safety, when there is no safety. A drowning man would catch at a straw; and a dying sinner would grasp at a shadow of hope, rather than go to eternity without any hope at all. The better way is to begin now, and lay up for ourselves a good foundation against the time to come.

To embrace religion early in life, affords the most comfort. Infidels and sceptics may tell you, that a life of piety is made up of superstitious melancholy. But we claim to be the better judges in the case; they have tried the ways of sin, and are ignorant of the pleasures of piety, but we have tried both, and know that the former is the road to misery, and the latter the road to felicity. To know that God is our Father and Friend, and that we are his children,

and in his favor, affords the highest degree of pleasure of which we are susceptible through life. And, surely, nothing short of this state can cheer us in the vale of death. If we spend our lives in the ways of God and religion, we may confidently expect his supporting grace when dying; for though our hearts and flesh shall fail, God will be the strength of our heart, and our portion for ever. But if we treat God as an enemy through life, with what sort of confidence can we claim his friendship in death?

In conclusion, we would observe, in no part of this discourse have we intended to say, that the salvation of the aged sinner is impossible. We only say, it is more difficult, and therefore less probable than that of the youth; for the truth of which we appeal to his own experience. And by him, dear young friends, take timely warning. A thorough preparation for heaven is the work of a life time. To say that God has given us more time than is necessary, would implicate his wisdom. To say he has given less, would impeach his goodness. Then begin now. Bow down to the authority of Christ. Take his yoke which is easy, and his burden which is light. "Seek the Lord while he may be found, and call upon him while he is near," and you shall have the pleasures for which you were born. Amen.

SERMON II.

PRAYER.

"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men," 1 Timothy ii, 1.

This exhortation of Paul was founded on certain facts brought to view in the preceding chapter, to which the term "therefore" in the text refers; namely, his own conversion, and the apostasy of others. For himself, the apostle admits he "was before a blasphemer, and a perse-

cutor, and injurious," but obtained mercy because he did it ignorantly in unbelief, which is perhaps more than could be plead in behalf of some of us. Next, he charges his son Timothy to war a good warfare: "Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith, have made shipwreck: of whom is Hymeneus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme." In view of these solemn facts, he exhorts us to pray for all men; for sinners, that they may be converted; and for those who have faith, that they may not fall from their steadfastness. We shall now endeavor to show,

I. What prayer comprehends.

Prayer is a petition to God, offered in the name of Christ, for some blessing we need, or to avert some evil we dread, according to his will. Of course, our petition should be reduced to some form of expression, whether spoken softly or vehemently; and though we think it unprofitable to confine ourselves to printed forms of prayer, composed by those who may be ignorant of our peculiar circumstances, we also think they are mistaken who suppose that a desire to be blessed is sufficient, without expressing that desire. Christ instructed his disciples to say, "Our Father, which art in heaven," &c., and not think it merely. The reason is obvious: though God understands our wants as well before we express them as he does after, the thought of them does not exert the same influence on our own minds that is exerted by expressing them in words, to say nothing of the influence it has on others when we pray in public.

Another important thing comprehended in the general subject of prayer, is, supplication. Prayer brings the petition before the throne, and supplication urges the plea. This is a Scriptural distinction, not only as to the name, but likewise as to the things designated. The case of the importunate widow is a good illustration. "And he spake

a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; saying, 'There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: and there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily."

Prayer also comprehends intercession; that is, pleading with God for others. The love of Jesus produces in our hearts ardent desires for the salvation of our fellow creatures, and an affecting concern for their safety, which inclines us continually to plead with our heavenly Father for them, and thus to imitate our blessed Redeemer, "who ever liveth to make intercession for us." How far it pleases God to spare the wicked in answer to the prayers of the righteous in the name and for the sake of his Son, is difficult to tell; but it is certain that a few righteous souls would have saved the cities of the plain, and it is probable the Lord spares our wicked world only for the sake of Christ's intercessions, and the comparatively few righteous that are in and praying for it, as he does not generally destroy the righteous with the wicked, but waits for the former to depart, before the storm is suffered to break on the latter.

Giving of thanks is a very material part also of the general duty of prayer. To record with words of gratitude the loving kindness of the Lord, is a work at once pleasing to us, and acceptable to him. The want of this gratitude is a real fault. If you confer on one who is an object of charity many favors, and instead of blessing you for them, he continually complains because you do not give

him more, would you not think him an ungrateful and undeserving man? How then do we grieve our heavenly Father by our complaints on account of what we have not received, when we should be praising him for blessings already conferred. If we would serve him acceptably, we must praise him for all that is past, and trust him for all that is to come. Therefore, we would exhort you in the language of Paul to the Philippians: "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

II. We shall next notice, briefly, the several kinds of prayer.

Public prayer is of general utility in a worshiping assembly. It impresses, more or less, with a sense of duty to God, all who pay respectful attention to it, and is a deeply interesting part of public service; but it is specially beneficial to all who suitably engage therein. The whole congregation should unite fervently in this solemn exercise. When the minister says, "Let us pray," he does not mean that while he prays, others should be mere idle spectators. All are dependent on the Almighty, and therefore all should pray humbly and earnestly to him to pity, bless, and save them. Hence, David said to the congregation of Israel, "O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker."

Secret prayer, in the intervals of public worship, is essential to our individual peace and prosperity. Public prayer is good as far as it goes, but recurs too seldom to keep alive the spirit of devotion, say one day in the week. Who could fast six days out of seven, habitually, and retain his health and strength? And if we pray only on the Sabbath, we shall only linger out a short and sickly spiritual existence. If three meals a day are necessary to

sustain the health and vigor of the body, our souls should be put off with no less. Shame on the Christian who eats more frequently than he prays. David's rule would be good for us all, "Evening and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud; and he shall hear my voice." Precious, indeed, are the moments of the Christian, when, separated from the observation of men, and the corroding cares of life, he is admitted to audience with God, and has leave to tell his Father in heaven all he feels, desires, hopes, or fears, with the promise and expectation of being heard and answered. Suitable direction and encouragement for the performance of this duty are furnished by our Savior in these words: "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly."

Family prayer is another important duty of the Christian. As we are never safe only when God protects us, and never happy only in his favor, we should begin and end each day with him, thus committing constantly to his care all our family concerns. That this duty is obligatory on heads of families, may be satisfactorily gathered from the Holy Scriptures; if not by express precept, yet by fair inference; and the performance or neglect of it is a good general test of a man's piety. The most holy Christians attend conscientiously and strictly to it, while the more careless and lukewarm generally neglect it in whole or in part. The faithful observance of this duty is essential for the spiritual interest of all the family, especially the children, who, after all, are more influenced by example than precept. Indeed, we do not regard any man religious, in any important sense of the word, if he be the head of a family, unless he offers up the morning and evening sacrifice of prayer and praise on the family altar. But here we have not time to dwell.

Again, social prayer is highly proper and beneficial. We should, at stated times, assemble for prayer meeting; and being met, each one should take up his cross and act his part in the solemn service, when called on by those appointed to lead in, or conduct the exercises of the occasion; because if one may decline, so may another, and finally all might be excused, and consequently the meeting dissolved. Does one object on the ground that he is not in the spirit of it? This only shows the greater necessity of going to work, that he may cultivate that spirit. Does another wish to decline, because he regards his gifts as being inferior to those of his brethren? The Lord requires him to use only the gifts bestowed on him, and not those given to others. We would farther encourage such, by saying, they are most eloquent in prayer who are most simple-hearted, fervent, and believing. Indeed, the want of faith is more in our way than the want of fluency; for if we pray much in secret, as we should do, and are there in the habit of expressing the wants of ourselves and others, can we not express the same vocally? Do you object, saying, the people would hear me, and that would be embarrassing? We answer, God hears when we pray in secret, and surely we should not be more ashamed before men, than in the presence of the Almighty. A proper sense of our wants, and a little faith in God's ability and willingness to hear and answer and bless, would relieve the whole difficulty.

Finally, on this part of the subject, we should have stated times to perform all these duties. Ejaculation, or occasional breathing of our thoughts and desires to God, may have its use, and afford some consolation; but we shall never maintain our ground, as Christians, much less grow in grace, without certain fixed times set apart for the duty of prayer, and the oftener the better, especially as it regards secret prayer; but this must depend somewhat on

the nature of our daily circumstances and business. What renders this method more important, is, the spirit of prayer will be cultivated. The more we pray the more we desire to pray, and the less we pray the less we care to pray at all. This has been ascertained by the experience of thousands. We know that business will interfere, and company will interfere with such rules, and the more we give way to such difficulties, the more they will intrude on our devotions, till at last we shall have scarcely any privilege left. To all such hindrances, we should say, thus far ye may come, and no further. A little system, and a little firmness, would overcome all such difficulties. It is worthy of remark, that David and Daniel, though much pressed with public business, found time to pray, regularly, three times a day; and certainly Christians should pray as much as Old Testament saints.

III. We shall now speak of the nature or properties of prayer.

The language of prayer should be grave and dignified, but simple—without compliment or ornament, expressing our real wants in the most concise manner, and with child-like confidence. Every effort to make a display of words, or incorporate narrative, or learned quotations in prayer, is highly objectionable, as much so as it would be in a criminal pleading for his life. The Scripture examples of prayer are a standing reproof of such impropriety. The publican's prayer was, "God be merciful to me a sinner." The prophet Habakkuk said, "O Lord, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid: O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy." Now, in these examples, we find no circumstantial relation brought in by way of introduction—no flattering titles addressed by the suppliants to the Supreme Being. They spoke as if they had lost sight of every thing but the objects set forth in the petitions,

and those they urged with words expressive of vehement desire.

Prayer should be appropriate to the circumstances of those for whom it is offered. The sinner should pray for knowledge of his real condition; the penitent for pardon; the believer for full salvation; the afflicted for patience and resignation; the prosperous for humility; the volatile for gravity; and the depressed for cheerfulness, &c.

Sincerity is an essential property of prayer. God, who looks upon the heart, requires truth in the inward parts, and they who worship him acceptably, do it in spirit and in truth. The God of truth is always sincere in his threatenings, warnings, invitations and promises, and we should be sincere before him. We may deceive ourselves and others, but God cannot be deceived, and he will not be mocked. This sincerity is perfectly reconcilable to the most affecting sense of our unworthiness, and even with a sense of guilt for past sin, for which we now repent and ask forgiveness. We pray, not because we think ourselves good, but that the Lord may make us better and more happy; and when we know ourselves to be honest with God and our own souls, however unworthy, it gives us confidence to ask in the name of Jesus the things we need. Then, like Job, we can say, "He knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold."

Humility is indispensable to genuine prayer; that is, a sense of our unworthiness as fallen creatures, called, in Scripture, poverty of spirit, on which many blessings are pronounced: "He that humbleth himself, shall be exalted." In order to this, we should bow low and confess heartily before God, throwing ourselves upon his clemency in Christ Jesus. We do not contend that any one position of the body in prayer is exclusively required, or absolutely essential to success; but kneeling is the ordinary mode spoken of in the Bible This is more convenient for public

worship than prostration on the face, and is vastly more favorable to the spirit of devotion than standing erect, with so many objects in view to divert the attention from the proper subject. It is very seldom that a standing congregation become deeply engaged with God in prayer, and it is still worse with those who sit in prayer. Sitting in prayer time, except for good reason, is disrespectful; standing to pray expresses some reverence, and has some show of authority in Scripture; but kneeling is the most Scriptural, the most humble, most devotional, and therefore most proper. Daniel stood on his knees three times a day, and prayed and gave thanks to God. David exhorted the people to kneel before the Lord their maker. When Peter called on God to raise Tabitha from the dead, he kneeled down and prayed. When Paul held a meeting of the elders of Ephesus, before they parted, he kneeled down and prayed with them all. When Christ repaired to Gethsemane, on the evening of his great agony, he withdrew from his disciples about a stone's cast, and kneeled down and prayed. And the apostle said to the Philippians, "At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;" that is, angels, men and devils shall feel his power, either to salvation or destruction, and acknowledge the same by bowing the knee before him. How much better it would be for proud mortals to bow to the sceptre of mercy now, than to be finally beaten down with the rod of his power, with which he will break his enemies in pieces, as a potter's vessel is broken.

Again, prayer must be according to the Divine will, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures. In asking favors at the throne of grace, we are limited only by the promises, and they are "exceeding great and precious." Still the Lord has never promised to grant any thing derogatory to his glory, or man's best interest; and were we to ask ever so

earnestly for such things, we should not receive them. For example, we might ask God to pardon our sins, without any reference to the atonement of Christ, or to take us to heaven in our sins; but either would be morally impossible. Again, we may pray for certain things which we suppose would be great blessings, but which he sees would prove curses to us; and, therefore, in mercy, he would withhold them from us, as a prudent father would withhold from his little child the hurtful toy, however anxious he might be to obtain it; from all which, it appears, we should pray with resignation to our heavenly Father's will; thus imitating the example of our great Redeemer, when he said, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt."

Lastly, we must pray in faith, trusting exclusively and fully in the Lord Jesus as a present and all-sufficient Savior, and in view of his most encouraging words, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father, in my name, he will give it you;" and again, "Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full."

We come now to notice,

IV. The subjects of prayer.

If the maxim, "Charity begins at home," be proper in any case, it may be so in this, that we be careful first to secure our own salvation. Each one of us has an immortal soul, a deathless spirit, which will assuredly be the subject of endless bliss or endless woe, according to the use or abuse we make of our time and privileges in this world. Its redemption cost the mighty sum which none could pay but the incarnate and spotless Son of God, and is worth more, in the scale of human felicity, than the earth would be, if it were solid gold. Well might Jesus say, "What shall a man be profited, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Ah, true enough; for if he lose his soul, he will lose all things else of course. Now, therefore, to avoid this total and irreparable loss, let each one

begin this moment to pray God to have mercy on him, a sinner, for Christ's sake, and never cease praying for one moment till his prayers shall be turned into praises, from a consciousness, such as nothing but the Holy Spirit can give, that he is pardoned and "born again."

This great object secured, while our hearts will expand with the love of God, and run out in prayer and desire for the salvation of all men, it may be admissible for us to feel very special concern for the salvation of the objects of our natural affection. It is a wise arrangement of Providence, that our natural affection should be stronger for wives and husbands, parents and children, brothers and sisters, than for strangers, because our first obligations toward human kind are to them; and why should not our spiritual affection be stronger for them, our interest for their salvation greater than for that of strangers? If this house were now on fire, whom should ye seek first to rescue from the flames? Here are our companions, parents, children, brothers and sisters, all around us, many of them apparently unconscious of their danger, while the flames of destruction are ready to kindle about them, and hell is moving beneath to meet them at their coming. Call mightily upon God to send his awakening Spirit to their hearts, and open the eyes of their understanding to see where they are going; to reach forth the hand of mercy, and snatch them as brands from everlasting burning, before the short day of their merciful visitation is ended, and the night of endless despair settles down upon their guilty, but blood-bought souls.

While we pray for our kindred after the flesh, we must not forget our brethren after the spirit, and brethren in Christ, all that love him in sincerity, of every name and every land. We should pray daily that their numbers and graces may be increased, till Zion becomes the wonder of the whole earth. Such prayers strengthen the bands of union, and increase the fellowship of saints. What sort

of a world would this be to live in, if there was no Church in the midst of it? If the last child of God but one was translated to heaven, would that one wish to stay here any longer? Thank God, that our lot was ever cast in his family, and among his people; and blessed be his holy name for the prospect of living with them for ever. It is true, we are very much scattered here, but we can meet often at the throne of grace, and while we pray for each other, strengthen the hope of meeting in our Father's house above.

In the meantime, we should pray for our enemies. Though our religion allows us to love some people more than others, it allows us to hate none; but requires us to love them that hate us, bless them that curse us, and pray for them that despitefully entreat us and persecute us. This precept of our Savior is founded in wisdom and goodness. By obeying it, we shall not only avoid much unprofitable conversation and bad feeling in regard to our enemies, but will at the same time cultivate the noblest principles of which our hearts are susceptible, even peace on earth and good will toward men.

We must not forget to pray for rulers, "for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty." Recollect, it is God that putteth one down, and setteth up another. Those rulers are all carrying out, as instruments, the purposes of his providence, and we should pray that they may be directed, and, when necessary, overruled for the best interest of the Church and world.

In a word, we must pray for all men, rulers and subjects, saints and sinners, friends and enemies. "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is

good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." From this exhortation to pray for all men, and that according to the will of God, because Christ gave himself a ransom for all, the inference is conclusive, that the salvation of all is possible; we might as well pray for fallen angels, as for that part of mankind excluded from an interest in the atonement of Christ, if there were any such. At the same time it is equally clear that their salvation is not unconditionally certain, otherwise our prayers for them would be useless. And, how wide is the field of our benevolent efforts to save the souls of redeemed sinners. As far as human population extends, we should follow them with missionaries and prayers, pleading with God, in the name of his Son, for Jews and Christians, Turks and pagans, saints and sinners. It is very encouraging to commence this plea in the language of the Psalmist, "O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come." May the Lord hasten it in his time!

One point more, and we are done. Let all remember, that the duty of prayer is first in point of time, as it is in point of importance. Paul says, "I exhort therefore, first of all," not last, nor second, "that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men." It is too common for us to serve the world and ourselves first, and to serve God only when we may, without interfering with our temporal business; but this is both ungrateful and unwise. Temporal and spiritual duties do not, necessarily, conflict with each other; when they do, so that we cannot attend to both, let us omit the less and perform the greater—the one which yields the greater good upon the whole. If we sacrifice earthly interests to wait

on the Lord, we may, through the mercy and free grace of God, inherit heaven; but if we neglect his service to accommodate ourselves, we only gain a trifle, while we lose our souls. We conclude, by exhorting all to "seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness," with the promise of having all things added.

SERMON III.

THE UNIVERSAL COMMISSION.

"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature," Mark xvi, 15.

THE first Gospel sermon that was ever preached in our world, was delivered to Adam and Eve immediately after they fell—the substance of which was, the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head; meaning, Christ shall destroy the power of Satan. This allusion to the plan of salvation, though faint, was sufficient to inspire some degree of hope.

The same thing was explained to Abraham more fully when the Lord promised him, saying, "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed;" for this seed, Paul tells us, was Christ. From this period the system of the Gospel was gradually and slowly developed, until, in the fullness of times, Messiah made his appearance in our forlorn world, according to the ancient prophecies. He was dedicated to the sacred office of the priesthood, at the age of thirty years, by John his distinguished forerunner; after which he explained the precepts of revealed religion by his discourses; established the truth of them by his miracles; "died to make reconciliation for the sins of the people;" demonstrated all his divine claims by the resurrection of his body; appeared alive to his disciples; and renewed their commissions in the language of the text,

"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." We propose now to inquire,

I. What is implied in the Gospel?

II. To whom is the Gospel to be preached?

I. You will please to observe, from the way the first inquiry is proposed, that we only intend to consider the term *Gospel*, in its most general sense, to mean the whole Christian revelation, and remark that it implies,

1. A system of *truths* to be believed. And here we have only time to refer to some of the sources of evidence, without any discussion of them; such as, the character of its author, the benevolence of its design, its fitness to our moral condition, the circumstances under which it was written, the purity of its precepts, grandeur of its doctrines, sublimity of its style, fulfillment of its predictions, power of its miracles, efficiency of its operations, &c.,

2. A system of *doctrines* to be received, viz: The existence and attributes of the Triune God, the creation and fall of man, the redemption of the world by Christ, divine influence or the agency of the Spirit, repentance and faith, justification, sanctification or holiness of heart, practical obedience, perseverance to the end of life, the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body, a general judgment, and eternal rewards and punishments in heaven and hell. Such are the grand outlines and essential doctrines of the Gospel. We say essential, because they are to Christianity, what the bones and sinews are to the animal frame: take these away, and you might as well undertake to convert the world by Seneca's morals, as by the Gospel. But stop, "It is no matter what we believe, so we are good people." We admit this is the more important consideration; but, in order to be *good*, we must have good rules for becoming so. If we adopt bad rules of faith, and live according to them, we are sure to be bad people. If we

adopt good rules of faith, and live up to them, we are sure to become good people. If we adopt bad rules, and lead pious lives, we shall be good, inconsistent people. If we adopt good rules, and lead vicious lives, we shall be bad, inconsistent people. And nothing is more natural, than for our opinions to influence our conduct: it is in this view of the subject, that we give it such importance.

3. A system of *precepts* to be obeyed. All our relative duties to God, and one another, are here embodied; the whole of which our Savior arranged under two general heads, viz., supreme love to God, and universal good will to men. "On these two hang all the law and the prophets:" whatever the law requires, or the prophets teach, are included in these two principles; and "blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have a right to the tree of life, and enter in through the gates into the city."

4. A system of *promises* to be enjoyed. Not, indeed, to the disobedient and impenitent; for to them, as such, there is no promise in all the oracles of God. But to all that will submit to the terms of grace, his promises are "exceeding great and precious:" suited to every possible condition in life, the promises of the Gospel afford us comfort when all other resources fail. Here the poor, the sick, the broken-hearted, the bereaved, the tempted, the persecuted, and dying, may find a balm for all their woes. We hasten to inquire,

II. To whom is this Gospel to be preached? The subject of this inquiry may be brought fairly before us by a few plain questions; and,

1. Why are the ministers of Christ required to "go into all the world?" Answer, because they are commanded to "preach the Gospel to every creature." Now, if you can find a country where no people of any kind live, then you will have found the limit of our mission. But just as far

as human population spreads, so far our commission requires us to go, though it be to the ends of the earth.

2. Why is the Gospel to be preached to every creature? Answer, because every creature of the human species has an interest in it. It is true, however, that the Jews had the first offer of salvation; for when Christ first sent out his disciples to preach, he directed them to go not in the ways of the Gentiles, nor into the cities of the Samaritans, but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. But after his death and resurrection, by which he broke down the partition wall that had divided the Gentiles from the Jews, he enlarged their commission to embrace all, whether Jews or Gentiles, all being alike interested in "the ministry of reconciliation." And if it were not so, we acknowledge our entire inability to give any rational explanation of our text. If it be true, that, "By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death;" and "these angels and men, thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed, and their number is so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished," then our text contains a useless commission. If we believe this doctrine, why "preach the Gospel to every creature," or to any creature? To whom shall we go, and what shall we say? If we preach to the elect, this is useless; for they will be saved, do what they may: if to the reprobated, it is lost labor; for they must be lost, do what they can. To us it appears to be work in vain for ministers to spend their time and strength, endeavoring to prove to the people that their dooms were unalterably fixed from eternity, and if they are to be saved, they will be saved. But in what part of the Divine record is this doctrine written? How widely does it differ from the message to the shepherds, "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall

be unto all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Savior, which is Christ the Lord." And how perfectly does the preaching of Christ and his apostles, and especially the commission to "preach the Gospel to every creature," accord with this heavenly message of good tidings to all people.

3. And why has "every creature" an interest in this Gospel? Answer, because Christ "died for all." To the law and the testimony—let the living oracles decide. "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." If the answer to this be, that, "though he died for all, it was only to save the elect, and procure temporal blessings for the others," then we request that Paul have leave to explain his own meaning, on this wise, "He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." Here Paul informs us, that the object of Christ's dying for all, was not to procure temporal blessings merely, but that they might live unto him. Next, we may expect to hear, that "he died to save all, but all does not mean every one." What then meant the same apostle, when he said to the Hebrews, "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man?" But every one, it is suggested, does not mean the whole world. Give us then an explanation of 1 John ii, 2, "And he (Christ) is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." The proof is now before us, that Christ died for all; for every man; and for the whole world: and if it can be written in language any stronger,

that he died to save every human being, we confess our ignorance of the plain import of words. "But this drives you into Universalism." So you say, who believe the Gospel has no conditions; and that for whomsoever Christ died, he died to save them absolutely and unconditionally, whether they would or not. But this is just as far from the truth, as that he died for the elect only. The design of Christ's death is set forth in these words, "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." And the consequence of believing or not believing the Gospel is plain from these words, "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned."

4. And why did Christ die for all? Answer, because "there is no respect of persons with God." Men, as it regards their union with God, were made equal by creation; and, as it regards the loss of that union, they made themselves equal by the fall. And though we admit it was mere favor that the Lord redeemed any, yet, if he redeemed any, he must either have redeemed all, or have been a "respecter of persons;" but he redeemed some, and Peter says, "God is no respecter of persons," therefore he redeemed all. How could it be otherwise, if Jehovah was impartial? The elect, before his election, was no better than the reprobate, before his reprobation; and the reprobate was no worse, previous to his reprobation, than the elect, previous to his election. If it be said, there was no before to either, but the state of each was determined from eternity, we would inquire, if a person can be chosen or reprobated from any condition, without being first in that condition? If not, and men were chosen and reprobated from eternity, it would follow, that the condition from which they were

thus chosen and reprobated, was one which existed before eternity. Or could a non-entity be either chosen or rejected? To sum up the whole, briefly, the Gospel implies a system of truths, doctrines, precepts, and promises, to be carried into all the world, because it is to be preached to every creature; and preached to every creature, because every creature has an interest in it; and every creature has an interest in it, because Christ died for all; and Christ died for all, because he "is no respecter of persons."

In the conclusion of our discourse, we would remark,

1. The doctrines of our subject are very encouraging to all who are called of God "to minister in holy things." Wherever we can find our fellow beings, we need be at no loss for subjects of our ministry. Without regard to age, sex, wealth, poverty, learning, ignorance, complexion, language, politics, creeds, or peculiarities, we are authorized to proclaim a full, free, and present salvation to all who will accept it on the easy and equitable terms of the Gospel. Instead of employing one-half of our time to prove to the people that their destinies were fixed before they were born, and that they can do nothing, and the other half in virtually denying all we have said, by warning, exhorting, and reproving, with as much zeal, as though we believed one of the reprobates could be saved, or one of the elect lost, we say, instead of all this doing and undoing, we are authorized and encouraged to invite all our fallen race to look to Christ, and be saved.

2. It is very encouraging to the people who hear and believe it. It teaches them if they are not saved, it is only because they will not come to Christ, that they might have life; that God is both able and willing to save them all; that grace requires no hard conditions of any. Of us he requires "repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ," and that in view of the influences of the Holy Spirit imparted to every man: of the heathen, the

faithful improvement of "that light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world:" and of infants and idiots, no conditions, because none are practicable. Then come, "ye that are far off, hear what he has done; and ye that are near, acknowledge his might:" come, ye weary and heavy laden, weak and wounded, sick and sore, poor and maimed, and halt and blind, the Savior bids you welcome: you, who have tasted that the Lord is good, "cast not away your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward." May God pour out upon us all his healthful Spirit, and bring us to his heavenly kingdom! Amen.

SERMON IV.

THE OPERATIONS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

"Quench not the Spirit," 1 Thessalonians v, 19.

THE Spirit here spoken of is, undoubtedly, the Holy Ghost, respecting which we, in common with Christians generally, hold this belief: "The Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, is of one substance, majesty, and glory with the Father and the Son, very and eternal God." Such is the language of the 4th article of our religion. The divinity and personality of the Holy Spirit is plainly taught, and abundantly proved, by the sacred writers in divers ways. He fills all space, and knows all things. David said, "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit?" And Peter said, "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." To HIM we are indebted for the sure word of prophecy, both in the Old and New Testament; and, of course, he possesses the attributes of omniscience, omnipresence, &c.

The Holy Spirit also bears titles of supremacy. We may here give one example. "Peter said, Ananias, why

hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? * * *· thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God;" that is, to the Holy Ghost, here called God. And why should he not be called God, seeing he does the works of God? When the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep, "the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." And Job describes the works of God, saying, "By his Spirit hath he garnished the heavens." But the Holy Spirit is much more prominent in the spiritual, than in the material creation. What is the regeneration or sanctification of a soul, but the work of God? To accomplish this, requires the same power that it takes to make a world. But this work of grace, whether it be called renovation, regeneration, new birth, conversion, purification, washing, sanctification, new creation, translation, adoption, transformation, quickening, baptism, or resurrection, is usually ascribed to the agency of the Holy Spirit. To quote all the authorities would be too tedious: let a few suffice. Paul said to the Corinthians, "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." The same apostle said to Titus, we are saved "by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."

From all this appears the vast importance of heeding the admonition in the text, "Quench not the Spirit." And this appears still more important from the consideration of our Savior's words to the scribes, who charged him with casting out devils by Beelzebub; from which we learn, that the unpardonable sin is willfully and maliciously attributing to Satan those works, which are manifestly performed by the Holy Spirit. We can only repeat a part of the answer which Jesus gave to those opposers of the truth, "Verily, I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons

of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: but he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation: because they said, He hath an unclean spirit."

In the further consideration of this subject, we shall speak,

I. Of the operations of the Spirit.

There is no doctrine more clearly taught in the Holy Scriptures than the doctrine of divine influence, or operation of the Spirit of God upon the heart of man; nor is there any doctrine, the propriety of which appears more obvious, when viewed in connection with our depravity and helplessness. We are "by nature children of wrath, even as others." There is, in this respect, no difference between Jews and Gentiles, "all are under sin," or under condemnation as sinners; for "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;" and as all are fallen, so are all helpless. God says, "Without me, ye can do nothing." How could they do any thing of themselves, who "were dead in trespasses and sins?" The sum of the whole matter then is briefly this: Man, apart from the grace of God, is powerless, and cannot help himself; he is spiritually or morally dead, and cannot raise himself to "newness of life." Hence the necessity of the Holy Spirit to quicken him, that he may live. Paul, who once cried out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" afterward said, "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Sin is bondage; but "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." This Spirit is the only efficient agent by which the fallen nature of man can be renewed, and made fit for the kingdom of God. The answer of Jesus to Nicodemus is in point, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the king-

dom of God. That which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

Again, the operation of the Spirit, in changing the heart of man, is indispensably necessary, not only for all men, but for all men of every generation; because human nature, in its fallen and unregenerate state, is alike depraved and helpless in all ages, and in all countries. Whatever difference there is between us and the most degraded heathens, in a moral point of view, is not natural, but of grace. Hence, the folly of those who admit that the Holy Ghost did operate in the days of miracles, but does not now. Can man change his own corrupt nature now any more than he could in the days of miracles, or is there any less necessity for such change now than there was then? Some seem to think it a settled point, that the operations of the Holy Ghost ceased with the days of miracles; but if so, then of course there have been no conversions since, for he is the only efficient agent in the accomplishment of that work. It is true, he uses instruments; but these, without him, could no more convert a soul, than the pen could form a letter, without the power that wields it. The word of God, for example, is "the sword of the Spirit;" but as the sword cannot slay an enemy, unless it be directed by the hand of the warrior, no more can the letter of the Gospel convert a sinner, without the power of the Spirit attend it, and cause it to be quick and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword.

We are happy to know that man is not left to the dim light of reason, or the uncertain speculations of human teachers on this most momentous subject. The Savior of man, before he left the world, settled the question unequivocally,

that the Holy Spirit was to continue in the Church militant to the latest generations of men. In one of his last discourses with his disciples, he said to them, "If ye love me, keep my commandments: and I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth in you, and shall be in you." Who this Comforter, that Jesus said should abide with his people for ever, was, is definitely decided by himself during the same discourse, and only a few moments subsequent, when he added, "These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." Now, by putting these two testimonies, in their proper connection, together, they are complete and decisive authority to prove, that the people of God have a Comforter, that said Comforter is the Holy Ghost, that he is to abide with them for ever; and, consequently, that the Holy Ghost was not only in the first Christian Church, but he is in the Church still, and will continue in her to the end of time, till her latest and youngest child shall be "redeemed, regenerated, and disinthralled." We rejoice, greatly, that these words come from the highest authority, and are so plain as not to be misunderstood; they are a standing solace to every true believer; and, so far as this point is concerned, a full, irresistible refutation of Arian and Socinian heresies of every form, and in all ages. There are, also, many other authorities on this point entirely conclusive, but these are sufficient.

The general offices of the Holy Spirit are designated by our Lord Jesus Christ in these most precious and ever memorable words, "But now I go my way to him that

sent me, and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou? But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart. Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you."

To reprove the world of sin, is to convince the whole human family of their lost condition as sinners; this, our Savior said, the Comforter should do, and this he doubtless performs. John proclaimed Jesus as the light of the world, and said the life that was in him was the light of men, and added, "That was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world;" but as the Gospel did not then, and does not yet, enlighten every human being of every nation, we may safely conclude, that the light here spoken of was spiritual light, heavenly influence, and that it is the agency of the Divine Spirit, through which Jesus lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

The second general office of the Holy Spirit is to reprove or convince the world of righteousness. This he does by imparting to every man some knowledge of right and wrong; by changing the hearts of believers from sin

to holiness, and bearing evidence of that change, when wrought, to the mind of the converted subject internally, and to his neighbor outwardly, by the influence which the change produces in his manner of life. Thus, while "the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God," the reformation of life which immediately attends and follows, renders the change obvious to others, convincing the world of righteousness, and the necessity of embracing it themselves. And this work of the Spirit, convincing men of righteousness, was the more necessary, as Jesus showed to his disciples, because he went to his Father, and they should see him no more, as they had done; and hence the necessity of the Spirit to supply the place of his personal teaching, and give light and life to the record of his truth.

The next general office of the Comforter or Holy Spirit, is, to reprove or convince the world of judgment, because the prince of this world was judged or condemned by him, who is the light of the world. While the Spirit of truth convinces the sinner of his sin, and the Christian of his gracious acceptance with God, he equally convinces both of future retribution; but not with the same effect on both. The sinner contemplates a solemn grave, a resurrection to condemnation, an expiring world, an infinite Judge, and an irrevocable sentence, with confusion and terror; but the established Christian views the future with confidence and composure: in the grave he expects rest, in the resurrection he looks for triumph, and in the character of the Judge he recognizes his best friend. We shall now endeavor to show,

II. What is meant by quenching the Spirit.

To quench the Spirit is so to resist him, as to defeat his successful operation upon our hearts, or destroy the good intended. Perhaps the believer in coercive grace, may regard this as impossible, and ask, Cannot God perform

whatsoever he will? Certainly he can; but the question is, Does God will to save the sinner by force, or with his consent? The latter, most certainly. Though he irresistibly convicts all sinners, he irresistibly converts none. This is clearly a Scriptural distinction, as appears, for example, in the case of Saul, afterward called Paul, "who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious." While he was in a rage, breathing out death and slaughter, he was irresistibly stricken to the ground; but on learning the character of Him whom he persecuted, and by whom he was now prostrated, he surrendered, and humbly asked for direction, saying, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" He obeyed the direction given, and after seeking, by prayer and fasting, for three days, found mercy, and became an apostle, and subsequently said, "Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision,"—plainly implying, that he might have been disobedient; and what else, but willfully refusing the grace of God, prevents any from being saved? Christ said, "Ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life; which implies, they had power, not of their own, but of grace, to come, but they refused to exercise it. God said by the prophet Isaiah, "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it;" from all which it appears God treats us as free, accountable beings, having liberty to choose or refuse; for though he does, in great mercy, convince all of sin, and apprise them of their danger, he converts none till they are not only willing to be converted, but anxiously praying for it.

But it may be asked, Is it not certain that in all cases where the Spirit begins a good work of grace in the hearts of men, he will carry it on to perfection? We think not. It would be so, if all men were willing to be saved

on proper terms, and Paul was confident this would be the case with the brethren at Philippi; but the ground taken by some, that wherever God begins a work of grace, he is sure to carry it on until the day of Jesus Christ, unconditionally, and without man's consent, is untenable. If this doctrine were true, all men would be certainly saved; for we have already proved by the sacred Scriptures, and the proof can easily be enlarged, that God begins a good work, even the good work of conviction for sin, in the hearts of all men. Again, if there is no possibility of resisting the operation of the Holy Spirit, why does Paul admonish us not to do it? To warn people against an evil that never can possibly befall them, is irreconcilable to common sense, and much more so to inspiration. But it is certain that some have resisted that Spirit, and consequently that others may do so. To the law and the testimony—let the living oracles decide. Stephen said to the Jews, "Ye stiff-necked, and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye." Now, let it be recollected, this declaration was made in the days of miracles, when, it is supposed by some, the Holy Ghost operated more powerfully than he does at present; and if sinners could and did resist him then, as their fathers had done before them, how does it follow that sinners cannot resist him still?

To resist the Spirit, and to quench the Spirit, we suppose to mean the same thing. The idea of quenching the Spirit is taken from the ordinary operation of extinguishing fire, which may be done by excluding the air, withholding the fuel, or by the application of water. In like manner, we destroy the work of the Spirit in our hearts, by smothering or suppressing religious feelings and exercises, when he moves us to pray, sing, rejoice, exhort or preach; or we may destroy it by neglecting the means of grace, which will cause the flame of devotion to expire as naturally and

as certainly, as the fire will become extinct without adding new supplies of fuel; or we may destroy it more readily by indulging in sin, which is to the work of the Spirit, what the application of water is to fire; for "the wages of sin is death," temporal, spiritual, and eternal. Therefore, do not, by any of these means, quench the Spirit, lest the vital spark of spiritual life become extinct, and you be seized with the cold chill of everlasting death.

III. We shall conclude the subject with a few practical remarks.

To resist the strivings and operations of the Holy Spirit, is extremely hazardous; it is running the awful risk of sealing our own everlasting destruction. There is not another agent in the universe, to which we can look with confidence, to change our wicked hearts, and create us anew in Christ Jesus, but the Holy Ghost; and God says, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man." Indeed, when we consider the number and character of our sins, it is marvelous that his Spirit has not long since, like Noah's dove, taken his everlasting flight from us. Should we, by persisting in a course of opposition and insult, provoke him to leave us entirely, our case would be at once helpless and desperate for ever.

But this doctrine of divine influence is very encouraging to the humble seeker of salvation. Though he be feeble, the Spirit can impart strength to him; though his heart be hard, divine influence can take away the heart of stone, and give the heart of flesh; though it be polluted with sin, it may be cleansed by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost; and though his heart condemn him, the Spirit can take the things of Christ and show them unto him, and make them his own.

The doctrine of the operation of the Spirit is consolatory to all God's children. He quickens them in their devotions, enables them to sing with the spirit and with the

understanding also, to pray with the spirit and with the understanding also. Thus God upholds them by his "free Spirit," gives them peace in believing, and joy in the Holy Ghost, with the earnest of a better inheritance hereafter.

Finally, the doctrine of the Spirit's operation is highly encouraging to the faithful minister of the Gospel. Without this, what would be his hope of success? Sinners are spiritually dead, and can the minister quicken them into life? As well might the sculptor speak life into the cold marble statue. But the ground of his encouragement is, God's Spirit attends his own word. While the preacher speaks the truth, as it is in Christ, and with personal faith in him, the Holy Spirit speaks to the hearts of the people, with a voice that wakes the dead, and causes the dry bones to live. If we speak the truth on this subject, may God answer for himself, and pour the Spirit of all grace upon the people! Amen.

SERMON V.

RECONCILIATION.

"Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God," 2 Corinthians v, 20.

It is very generally admitted, that there is a Supreme Being, who exercises a moral government over the world; that he is a God of wisdom, power, and goodness; and to be consistent, we must allow that to love him supremely, and obey him willingly, is the reasonable service of every rational and intelligent creature. Is it not strange, therefore, that we should be his enemies, and that the apostle and ambassador of Christ should have occasion to exhort us to be reconciled to God? The propriety of this exhortation or entreaty may appear more obvious as we progress in the subject. We purpose to speak,

I. Of the want of reconciliation, with which we are indirectly charged.

And to obviate future difficulty, suffer us here to explain, that opposition to the will of God, is, virtually, opposition to himself; for who rebels against any sovereign, but he who refuses submission to his laws? So in this case.

There is a want of reconciliation in man to the established order of God, in the system of *nature*. It is true, in this vast system, we see much to admire, and we bestow much praise, but do not we indulge in some censure? For example, we are glad that the earth rewards the husbandman for his toils, yet many would like it better if it would bring forth spontaneously, and fill their closets, cribs, and barns, without toil or care. "In the sweat of thy face, shalt thou eat bread," is an order of God, against which many hearts rebel. Again, we love life, sweet, precious life, the best temporal gift of Heaven to man; but would not many sinners like it better, if it were longer, yea, if it were everlasting? For the thought of losing it, sheds a gloom over all their prospects. And if it be objected, that these things are not according to the original constitution of nature, this alters not the case for the better; for such are the facts now, and we must take the world as we find it, and not as it should be.

There is a want of reconciliation to God in the order of *providence*. What is providence? It is the care God exercises over his creatures, including their sustenance, preservation, corrections, comforts, &c., &c. At present, we shall not stop to attend to the objections of those who question, either the certainty or universality of that providence, but simply inquire, are we reconciled to it? We fear only in part. True, we are well pleased with those providences which lavish upon us life, health, friends, food, raiment, prosperity in business, promotion to office, &c.; but how is it with us under a reverse of fortune, when,

instead of those, we have affliction, poverty, blasted prospects, and sore troubles? Do we like these as well as the others? We say as well; for all things that befall us in the arrangements of providence, are intended for the same great end—the glory of God in our final felicity. All our murmurs against our adverse fortunes, are so many proofs of the want of reconciliation to God in divine providence. Perhaps we should explain before we leave this branch of the subject, that Jehovah deals with man in his providence, as he does in his grace; for in both, he restrains vice and folly, and promotes virtue and piety, as far as practicable, without impairing our free agency, and no more; for to go beyond this, would destroy our accountability, and defeat his own plans.

There is a want of reconciliation to *the law* of God. By law here, we mean the whole revelation of God's will to man, as set forth in the Holy Scriptures. To this law the sinner is not reconciled, because it is not reconciled to his conduct and manner of life. For example, the covetous are not reconciled to the law of God, because it demands charity; the fraudulent are not, for it requires justice; the proud are not, for it teaches humility; the dissipated are not, for it imposes temperance; the unclean are not, for it enjoins chastity. And in a word, when we have found vice in a thousand forms, we shall have a thousand witnesses that sinners are irreconciled to God's law, because it is opposed to their conduct; and this is necessary, that they may know themselves; "for by the law is the knowledge of sin."

As we are not reconciled to God, and that irreconciliation is owing to our depravity and rebellion, it may be fairly inferred, that he is not reconciled to us. And what is here only inferred, is elsewhere plainly declared; for while it is said on one hand, "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither

indeed can be," (and of course it must be destroyed in order to peace,) it is also written on the other hand, "God is angry with the wicked every day." How then can these two parties be brought together? To find an answer to this question, brings us to speak,

II. Of the means of reconciliation.

The *atonement* is the most essential as the foundation of all others. "The wages of sin is death," and "the soul that sinneth shall die," are laws enacted in view of the nature of God, and the fitness of things; and, consequently, can neither be changed, nor violated with impunity. Hence, "without the shedding of blood there is no remission" or pardon of sin. But the Lord "hath found a ransom" for us; "for he hath made him to be sin (a sin offering) for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." And does this holy person, offered for sin, possess the essential merit which the importance of the case demands? This cannot be doubted, seeing his name is EMMANUEL; that is, God with us. Nor could any one of less ability perform the work; for any created being, however exalted, is bound to serve his Creator with all his noble powers: hence, if Christ himself were a finite or delegated Savior, he would owe to his author all the service he was able to perform; and, therefore, would have nothing left with which to buy salvation for man. But, as the Divine law-giver, he voluntarily steps forth and offers his human soul and body, upon the flaming altar of his divinity, an all-sufficient sacrifice for sin.

And this view of the subject appears to be essential to his office as mediator; for what is a mediator? One who acts as a peace-maker between two parties. Hence, "a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one" party, and we another; "for there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave

himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." Anciently, it pertained to the office of mediation to reconcile differences; and the manner was to bring the contending parties to a convenient distance asunder, when the mediator stepped between them, laid one hand on each, and proceeded to make propositions of peace. To this custom, there is an allusion in the book of Job, where it is said, "Neither is there any daysman between us, that he might lay his hand upon us both." But we would ask, who shall, or who can, act as a daysman between offended Jehovah and rebel man? A man? His arm is too feeble to reach heaven. An angel? His arm is too short to reach earth. Who then? None but the Lord Jesus Christ, the God-man Mediator; he, suspended between the heavens and the earth, with the right hand of his divinity, lays hold on the eternal throne, with the left hand of his humanity, grasps a sinking world; and by an exertion of those arms, which are nerved with omnipotence, brings heaven and earth, God and man, together. For "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, (of course himself to the world,) not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation."

The ministry of his own appointing is one of the means of reconciliation. When Christ tabernacled on earth, he preached his own everlasting Gospel, and before he ascended to heaven, he appointed men to labor in the ministry of the word, who, in our text, are called *ambassadors;* which term, among statesmen, designates persons sent by public authority, to transact business with some foreign power; but here it means persons sent by the Lord Jesus Christ to offer, from himself, terms of reconciliation and peace to fallen man. Their commission is in these words: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that

believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned."

But how shall we distinguish the ambassadors of Christ from mere pretenders to that character? The rule is plain and easily applied, "By their fruits ye shall know them;" namely, the fruits of holiness, indicating a thorough change of heart, and the fruits of their ministry, or multiplied converts from sin to newness of life, as the seals of a true and living ministry. It is not to be presumed, that Christ sends any on this embassy but his own loyal subjects, constituted such by genuine conversion, and the Spirit of adoption. From among these, his own disciples, some are "chosen vessels" to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ to the whole world; and these the Holy Ghost hath made overseers to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. Those whom God converts and sends out as instruments to convert others, and those only, are the authorized ambassadors of the Lord Jesus Christ. We know that some pretended ministers of the Gospel, deny the doctrine of special calls to the work of the ministry, as they do that of the operation of the Spirit, altogether, and contend that any person has a right to preach who chooses to do so; they frankly concede, that *they* have not been baptized by the Holy Ghost, or moved by him to preach; and, of course, according to their own showing, they are neither converted, nor commissioned as ambassadors of Christ, but are intruders into the sacred office, teaching the way to heaven before they have learned it themselves. It is certainly a very singular delusion, under the influence of which, men can set up a claim to the office of Christ's ambassadors, and at the same time acknowledge that he never sent them. To their own master they stand or fall, and there we leave them, and their notions of self-created authority to preach and administer the ordinances of Christ.

Whatever we may lack beside—and it is to be regretted that we are so deficient—if we would be "able ministers of the New Testament," we must be "indued with power from on high;" so that, like Paul's, our speech and our preaching may not be "with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." Such a ministry must be more or less successful, causing the hearer to feel that the Gospel is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth;" and, therefore, that he is not at liberty to reject the message which God sends him, merely because he does not admire the messenger who bears it. Hence, the dignity and authority of the sacred office of the ministry, insomuch, that when Christ sent out the twelve apostles, he said unto them, "He that receiveth you, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me." And when he sent out the seventy disciples, he said unto them, "He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me."

On this subject, we wish to be understood, not as claiming those miraculous powers of healing, &c., which pertained to the apostles: all we contend for is, that every true minister of the Gospel is moved by the Holy Spirit to that work, and that he cannot decline it with impunity; and that for the same reason, namely, because God has sent him, the people cannot reject his message without increased condemnation. Hence, Paul said to the Corinthians, "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savor of his knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: to the one we are the savor of death unto death; and to the other the savor of life unto life? And

who is sufficient for these things?" This is dignity enough for us, and far more than we feel worthy to bear. The office of the Christian ministry needs no human inventions, no costly robes, no glittering mitres, or imposing ceremonies to recommend it, much less does it need any of those assumed prerogatives, not secured to it in the Gospel charter. For ourselves, as a body of Christian ministers, we utterly disclaim all pretension to what Papists and High Churchmen call the divine succession, and with it we disclaim all Popish infallibility, and all that high-toned priestly authority which lords it over God's heritage, or interferes with the rights of conscience; but we do humbly claim to be men whom God has called, commissioned and sent to preach his everlasting Gospel; and if any doubt this, we refer them to the thousands of sinners who have been reformed and saved through our instrumentality. These are our epistles of commendation, known and read of all men. "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."

For your encouragement and consolation, we remark, in the next place, so far as the atonement of Christ and the pure ministry of his word are rightly received and properly used, with their accompanying influences, of which we cannot now speak particularly, so far they will effect the desired reconciliation, being mixed with faith in them that hear. Hence, the degrees of reconciliation. The impenitent and unbelieving are not reconciled in any sense, save that of being redeemed from the curse of the law to a state of offered mercy and possible salvation, which they can obtain only on condition of repentance and faith. True penitents, who are striving for the faith of Christ, are so far reconciled as to acknowledge themselves in fault, and desire conditions of peace. They know that the law is spiritual, but they are carnal, sold under sin, and cannot be justified

by the deeds of the law. A soul in this condition may well say, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." Now, there may be some relief to a soul in this condition, arising from the hope of pardon; and it is certain that a sincere resolution to reform, attended with humble and hearty confession of sin, affords some degree of consolation; but let no one deceive himself, by supposing this temporary and superficial comfort is evidence of a thorough and saving change of heart.

The justified, or those who are pardoned through faith in Christ, and regenerated by the Holy Spirit, are reconciled in a more important sense; they are admitted to the divine favor, relieved of their guilty fears, and "have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." The apostle of the Gentiles, alluding to his state as it was before he experienced this change, complained of captivity, bondage, wretchedness, a burden called the body of death, and helplessness under all this distress of mind; but widely different is his language when speaking of his happy deliverance from that state, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the law of sin and death." When a man has long felt prejudice in his heart against his neighbor, treating him as an enemy, but subsequently becomes satisfied the fault was his own, and effects a permanent reconciliation on proper terms, his mind is relieved of a burden, and he feels light and joyful; but what is this compared with reconciliation to God, attended with peace and joy in the Holy Ghost? It is the peace of God which passeth understanding; it is joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Still, it is proper to add, before we pass to the last division of the subject, there is a more permanent and

perfect state of reconciliation offered to the sincere and persevering believer, of which we have not spoken. We refer now to the privilege of those who attain the blessing called, in the sacred Scriptures, sanctification. The happiness of the justified is great at times, yet their peace is occasionally broken, and their rejoicing frequently followed by seasons of darkness; and so it will continue with us, until the carnal mind is destroyed, the old man crucified with the affections and lusts, and our own wills are brought wholly into subjection to the will of God, then our peace will flow as a river, and our righteousness abound as the waves of the sea: wherefore, "let us go on unto perfection." It is the privilege and duty of every child of God to do so, not by the works of the law, but by faith in the blood of Christ, which "cleanseth us from all sin;" and when once saved from inbred sin, and "filled with all the fullness of God," we shall be fully reconciled to his will in all things, and consequently enabled to "rejoice evermore," and the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. We shall now proceed, briefly, to notice,

III. Some of the motives to this reconciliation.

It would be an easy task to show, that every attribute of the Supreme Being operates as a strong argument and powerful motive to be reconciled to him; for while, on one hand, his goodness leadeth to repentance, on the other it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. But the consideration now to be chiefly insisted on, is, that of his great condescension, as brought to view in the text, wherein he beseeches us to be reconciled to him, and stoops to ask our love. Mr. Wesley inquired whether this case had any parallel, and showed, satisfactorily, it had none. Others have done the same, and we profess no new light on the subject.

Was it ever known that the ruined debtor, being offered

a full release by the merciful creditor, especially when the law imposes imprisonment for debt, refused to accept liberty from his thraldom? Only in the case before us. Here the sinner owes "ten thousand talents, and has nothing to pay" with; the Lord freely offers to forgive him the whole debt; he strangely refuses the offer, and that too in view of the prison of hell, where he must be confined for ever! Was it ever known that a convict, awaiting his fearful doom, being offered a reprieve from the sentence of the law, still hugged his chains, and courted premature death in a violent form? Only in this instance, where the sinner "is condemned already" for sin and unbelief; while on his way to execution, the Governor of the universe tenders him a present, full and free pardon, and even condescends to plead with him not to refuse his gracious offer, yet he stubbornly rejects the whole, and heedlessly rushes on to endless destruction! But some, yes, blessed be God, many are yielding to the sceptre of mercy, passing joyfully from the death and bondage of sin, into the life and liberty of his children. May others be encouraged to follow their example, till the kingdom of darkness shall be demolished, and the kingdom of Jesus shall prevail in all hearts, and over all lands!

Finally, we cannot, innocently, close our remarks on this subject, without a warning and exhortation to those who still refuse to be reconciled to our heavenly Father. Are any such here to-day, and do ye still persist in your most unrighteous opposition to the will of God? We warn you, in view of your own misery and helplessness, of your danger—we warn you by the number of your sins, and the aggravating circumstances under which they were committed—by the troubles of a guilty conscience, and the threatenings of God's violated law—by the horrors of a sinner's death-bed scene, and the terrors of the general judgment—by the worm that dieth not, and the fire that is

not quenched, to flee the wrath to come, while it is yet to come. But we cannot leave you yet, until we once more entreat you to accept the offer of mercy. We exhort you by the treasures that heaven has expended for our redemption, and the compassion which God has shown for man, rebel man—by the sweat and tears, and blood and agony of Christ for sinners, and by his still continued intercession in their behalf—by the strivings of the Holy Spirit, which you this moment feel—by the joys which religion imparts, and the dignity which she confers—by the fellowship of saints, and the ties of love—by the triumphs of dying Christians, and the glories of the first resurrection—by the approbation of the Judge of all the earth, and the undying pleasures of a blissful immortality, now to accept the offers of life and salvation. We do more than exhort, "As though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."

SERMON VI.

REPENTANCE AND CONVERSION.

"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord," Acts iii, 19.

This exhortation was given by Peter to a large congregation of people, under circumstances of peculiar interest. Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour; and as they passed the gate called Beautiful, they saw a man who had been lame in his ankles from his birth, placed there to beg alms of the people: he set up the usual claim of charity upon the apostles. Peter said, "Look on us;" and seeing his attention was fixed, observed, "Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have, give I unto thee: in the name of Jesus Christ rise up and walk." At first he seemed to hesitate,

but Peter took him by the hand and helped him, "and immediately his feet and ankle-bones received strength," so that he stood, walked, leaped, and praised God. He went on with them to the temple, and the people saw him and were amazed. This produced what might be expected in such a case—the people came running from every direction to see him, "greatly wondering." Presently Peter saw that they were mistaken respecting the cause of the change effected on the impotent man, and said, "Why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?" He then referred them to the Son of God, saying, "His name, through faith in his name, hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know;" and taking this position for the ground of his discourse, he delivered the exhortation contained in the text, which is a very plain and common subject, but no less important on that account. Our plan will be to speak,

I. Of repentance.

II. Of conversion.

III. Of the benefits of both.

I. Repentance, is that godly sorrow which produces reformation, and implies several particulars; one of which, and the first in order, is, *conviction of sin;* that is, a heartfelt sense of guilt and of our lost estate, such a sense as is produced by the Holy Spirit only, and by him is produced in the hearts of all men; for, said Christ, "he shall reprove the world (convince all people) of sin." And, accordingly, Paul saith, "The grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men, teaching us," &c.: wherefore, all are convinced, and, of course, left without excuse, if they repent not; for "God now commandeth all men everywhere to repent." If it be objected, we cannot repent of ourselves without divine aid, we answer, this is not required; for, beside the universal light we have already

alluded to, it was said by the apostles in their defense before the council, "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree: him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." The gift of repentance bestowed on us, through the mediation and intercession of Jesus, includes not only the blessed privilege of repenting, but also the grace of repentance.

Sorrow for sin, is the next thing implied in repentance. And here it is proper to guard against error, by observing, it is not every kind of sorrow that constitutes evangelical repentance; as there is a genuine coin, and a counterfeit money, so there is a true and a false repentance, as Paul clearly sets forth to the Corinthians in these words: "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death." Godly sorrow is of grace, and humbles us under a sense of our sinfulness before the Lord, under an overwhelming sense of our ingratitude, folly, presumption, and wickedness, in rebelling against the purest love, the highest authority, and the most condescending mercy of God: but the sorrow of the world is selfish, causing us to feel afflicted, not because we have offended God, but injured ourselves. Such is the repentance of the speculator, when he has made a bad bargain, and of the drunkard, when he has destroyed his property, health, family, and reputation; he is very sorry for himself, but not for his sins before God: and perhaps this sorrow of the world may also include unreasonable grief at the loss of friends, &c., in those who have no proper views of the providence of God in their affairs. Now, the effects of these two principles are materially different: the former affects us with reference to our obligation to God, and our eternal interest; the latter affects us with reference to ourselves, and our temporal

affairs. Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation; but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

It appears, from the examples recorded in the Bible, that evangelical repentance is powerful in its operation; so it was with David, when the sorrows of death compassed him, and the pains of hell gat hold of him—with Job, who said, "God maketh my heart soft, and the Almighty troubleth me"—with the publican, when he cried, "God be merciful to me a sinner"—so of Saul, the jailer, and all who are pierced with the sword of the Spirit.

The next thing implied in repentance is, *confession of sin.* This is sometimes to be made both to God and man; namely, when the crime is of such a nature, as not only violates God's law, but wounds the brethren, then we must confess to God to receive pardon, and to man that we may heal the wounded spirit; according to St. James' rule, "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed." But, suppose the offense to be committed against God only, then to him only it is to be confessed, and to him it must be confessed, if we would obtain absolution; for Solomon said, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." Wherefore, we recommend it as a good plan to go into the closet, chamber, forest, or other suitable place in secret, and on our knees, where no mortal ear can hear, nor mortal eye can see us, call to our minds the most aggravating circumstances of our lives, confess them to God one at a time; and then, lest we should have forgotten some, confess, in the aggregate, our public faults and secret crimes—the follies of our youth, and the sins of our riper years; and while we confess, let us expect, through Christ, a present, free, and full salvation from them all.

Reformation from sin, is the last thing implied in repentance. This is the most essential to our happiness,

and yet the most fearful to our hearts. To preach repentance is easy enough till we come to this point, and then we often fail. But if we fail here, we fail altogether. No matter how much we are convicted, how much we sorrow for sin, nor how much we confess, if we do not forsake sin, all the rest will go for nothing. And to forsake our more scandalous sins will not be difficult, nor will it be sufficient: we must give up all sins, right hand sins and right eye sins; namely, sins as convenient as right hands, and near our hearts as right eyes, must be all abandoned. "These are hard sayings, who can bear them?" Yet bear them we must, and obey them too, or else bear the ponderous load of divine wrath; for "except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish," is the stern decree of your Judge and mine; and such repentance will lead to conversion. However, some say that repentance does not lead to conversion—so far from it, that no one ever repents till he is first converted; that repentance is not the condition, but the effect of pardon; and so of faith. But where is this written? Paul said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved:" not be saved and thou shalt believe. Again, in the text, "Repent and be converted:" not be converted and repent; for this would derange the whole system of man's salvation, contradict the Scriptures, and erect a false ground of hope for the penitent. We come to notice,

II. Conversion; that is, a divine change of heart. The necessity of this must appear to those who think on the subject only a little. Felicity is desired by all, but how can we be happy without some qualification for happiness? Some say, after all that has been said on the subject, we hope that all the people will get to heaven. And, suppose they should, what better will they be for that? Will heaven make people happy, while unfit for the place? Would the ragged beggar feel any better by being in a

splendid palace, and in the presence of a king, or would it add to his shame and confusion? Yet the sinner would make a far worse appearance in heaven, before his awful Judge, than the beggar would in a palace; for there all his imperfections and abominations would be exposed in the light of eternity. And the consciousness he now feels of his guilt, makes him dread the immediate presence of God, as the disobedient servant does that of his master. An impenitent sinner has no relish for spiritual exercises; hence, the conversation of lively Christians, about Christ and his love, is irksome to him—he has no heart to sing the songs of Zion—no relish for prayer—the Sabbath to him is the most tiresome day, and shouting the praises of God offends him; how then could he enjoy himself in heaven, where it is always Sabbath, and where the constant employment of the people is to sing and rejoice for ever? Heaven, to him, would be the most lonesome place, if not the sorest hell in the universe. So much on the subject, to show how reasonable is the doctrine of regeneration, and how necessary is conversion to fit us for heaven and happiness.

If conversion be so essential, that we cannot be happy without it here or hereafter, pray tell us how we may "be converted?" Examine the Bible and it will inform you all in a few words: "Son, give me thy heart," is the sum and substance of the whole matter. And simple as it appears to be, it implies much, and requires much grace to perform. When the sinner first feels conviction, his usual course is to resolve not to be as bad as he has been; but, as yet, he has no intention to pray. Next, finding himself helpless, he consents to pray, but is determined to keep it to himself; and while occupying this ground, he must be "double-minded" and deceitful; for secretly he resolves upon reformation, but when with his companions in folly, he must do as they do, and as he formerly did, or else the

secret will get out that he is turning religious; so he prays a little and omits prayer much, repents a little and sins a great deal, makes one step toward heaven and two back to hell. After becoming more impressed, he is willing to be more open in his pretensions, and no longer tries to conceal his griefs; yet there is much self-will in his heart, by which he is led to choose the means and the modes of his salvation: hence he has his favorite messenger of grace, who is to be the instrument of his conversion; the kind of meeting at which he is to receive the blessing; perhaps the time and place of his adoption, and the evidences by which the Lord is to make it known to him; all of which show, that though he is in some sense willing to be saved, he is not yet willing to be saved in God's way. Suffer us to say, there is a point to which every man must come in order to conversion—namely, to make a full and unreserved surrender of his whole heart to God—willing to be saved at any time or place, under any circumstances, and by the instrumentality of any person—in a word, to say,

> "Here Lord, I give myself away,
> 'Tis all that I can do;"

and he will prove it is all that God requires. He saith, "I will be found of thee, if thou wilt seek me with the whole heart," but not without; for he is a jealous God, requires the whole heart, and will have no less. Then to let go every hold, and fall without reserve into the arms of mercy, trusting in Christ as the only and all-sufficient Savior, is the point to which the most moral man must come; and beyond which, the most wicked need not go to find salvation.

If we thus come to Christ and get converted, how shall we know it? By an inward consciousness arising from a divine influence, commonly called the witness of the Spirit—a doctrine clearly taught in the Scriptures. John said, "He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself;" and Paul said, "The Spirit itself beareth

witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." Now, if men would take these rules upon the subject, and leave "the tradition of the elders" where they find them, Christian experience would be as plain as any other matter. But many deluded souls go to the priest for pardon and the evidence of it; while some, instead of looking for this witness in their hearts, set out to read whole volumes, comparing their lives therewith, to ascertain whether they have a hope or not. Others present themselves before a whole Church, state the case, and let them determine the matter by vote. Another class of disciples come before a session of elders, to converse respecting the state of their hope, and see how the case stands; while many individuals have a fashion of dreaming themselves into religion. Thus, in the visions of the night, they imagine that they fight with beasts and conquer them; or are pursued by serpents and escape them; or are chased by savages and cross the river, without losing their scalps; all of which, by their superstitious neighbors, are construed into probable evidences of conversion. Such testimony may serve to flatter the consciences of carnal professors, but never can impart "the knowledge of God in the remission of sin;" and, consequently, can never afford real peace of mind. And, moreover, if ever you get converted, you will be the first person on earth that will know it. Before you have time to consult Churches, books, ministers, or friends, you will feel the sacred fire of love kindling on the altar of your own soul, and breaking out in hosannas to the Son of God. So men repent, get converted, and come to the knowledge of it. Let us now notice,

III. The benefits of both. They cause *our sins to be canceled:* "that your sins may be blotted out." This is a figure taken from the business of commerce. A man may have a bill of many items charged against him, but when

he makes proper adjustment of it, the clerk with one dash of his pen strikes out the whole, and he stands acquitted of all. In like manner, the sinner stands charged with "ten thousand talents," but when he repents and believes, they are "blotted out," and he is freely justified from all things. Now, is not this very desirable? Who among us would like to have all our sins exposed, even to this congregation? And yet, if we repent not, they must be exposed to an assembled world. Nor is there any way to avoid it but one, that is, to "repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out;" then shall they never rise up to shame us here or confound us in the world to come.

Another advantage is *spiritual enjoyment*—"when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." Here is a figure drawn from the operations of nature: the influences of the Spirit are often compared to rain, dew, &c. Declensions in religion are spiritual dearths, and revivals are showers, or times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. These are now frequent and extensive; and, of course, a subject of general conversation. O, says one, that we had a revival of religion here! And do we really want a revival on the Lord's terms? Then we can have it. But some want a revival as others do rain, viz., after their business is done, or their journey ends, and they are at leisure; or without wind, lest it break down the corn, and without hail, for fear it spoil the tender plants: however, when vegetation begins to die, rivers fail, and the earth to split open, they will become willing for it to rain any way. The application is easy. Some want a revival, if they can have it in their own style. There must be no deep sighs, heavy groans, loud songs, fervent prayers, awful sermons, rousing exhortations; and, above all, there must be no shouting, for this is confusion. But if we felt the want of a revival as we should do, we would be willing for God to send it in his own way. If he "come

in the sweet still voice," let him come: if "in the fire," let him come: if "in the whirlwind," let him come: if "in the thunder-storm," let him come: and if "in the earthquake," let him come: come to us—come in his own way, and come now. If this were our united prayer in faith and sincerity, we would have a revival here—have it now, before we leave the house—have it in our own souls, take it into our families, spread it through the neighborhood. O that the God of Israel would let his cloud of mercy roll this way, and give us a time of refreshing from his presence. To him be glory now and for ever! Amen.

SERMON VII.

THE WILL, OBEDIENCE AND PERSEVERANCE.

"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life," Revelation ii, 10.

After the ascension of our Lord, his disciples proceeded to execute the commission he had given them to evangelize the world. Persecution arose, and John, "for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ," was exiled to Patmos. Here, though cut off from the society of his friends, he enjoyed intercourse with his God; for while "in the Spirit on the Lord's day," Jesus met him, and delivered to him certain things to write to the seven Churches in Asia. In this communication, our Savior bestows honor where it is due, and censure where it belongs.

Our text is a part of the address to the Church at Smyrna, which begins thus: "And unto the angel," messenger or minister, "of the Church in Smyrna, write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive," the Lord Jesus. "I know thy works" of righteousness, "and tribulation" of mind, "and poverty" in worldly goods, ("but thou art rich" in faith and love,)

"and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan," enemies to the truth. "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer. Behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison," not himself, but will employ some persecuting ruler to do it for him, "that ye may be tried" before some earthly tribunal, and thereby have a full trial of your faith, sincerity and patience before God; "and ye shall have tribulation ten days"—in the prophetic sense, for ten years. But what of all this? "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life;" for no sooner shall the executioner have severed thy head from its trunk, than I will adorn it with an unfading crown. Such is the primary meaning of the text; yet "no Scripture is of any private interpretation," but "was written for our learning also, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope;" consequently, it may be properly, in a general sense, applied to every child of God. Our plan is to show,

I. These words imply liberty of choice, or freedom of the will.

The words of the text address us with conditions and motives, which are suitable only for beings who possess will, or a self-determining principle. Suppose a man should make a watch, and then say to it, if thou wilt measure time correctly for ten years, I will place thee in the Philadelphia Museum to enjoy both rest and honor; but if thou wilt not, then I will hurl thee into the fire. What propriety would there be in such an address? Just as much as in the one before us, if man be a creature who can act only as he is acted upon. Again, some allow the will to be as free as a pair of scales; as the heavier weight will certainly and necessarily produce a preponderance in the scale, so the stronger motive certainly and necessarily influences the will in its favor. We allow that the stronger motive ought to prevail with rational beings. But does it

prevail in all cases? Daily experience and observation say not. What are the motives for and against intemperance? The present indulgence of an appetite merely animal, and a train of appalling miseries on one side; and health, prosperous business, a happy family, confidence of friends, peace of mind, and future good on the other; yet, in many cases, men reject the stronger, and yield to the weaker motives. Again, the sinner is presented with heaven, by promise, on condition of a life of faith and obedience, and with hell, on condition of a life of unbelief, rebellion, and misery; yet in a large number of cases, he "chooses death in the error of his ways." Now, while such facts remain, we shall believe that man has a will or power of self-determination that can act, not only against the stronger, but even against the strongest motives.

At the same time this action is limited to our own sphere. Were we to choose to make a world, stop the ebbing and flowing of the sea, or arrest the planets in their regular course, we could not; for these are works of God, and not of man. But whatever comes within man's sphere of operation, he is free to do or not to do, to choose or refuse. Thus, man is naturally free respecting the avocations of life, to choose one and reject another; and he is morally free in view of a universal divine influence, producing a sense of right and wrong, to lead a life of morality, or abandon himself to a course of out-breaking wickedness. Or if it be not so, why have laws been enacted to punish the guilty? Is a man accountable for what he cannot possibly avoid? If "God hath freely and unchangeably foreordained whatsoever comes to pass," then all things are right, for God does nothing wrong; but if so, why confine the felon, or hang the assassin? But who compels to Sabbath-breaking, profanity, drunkenness, gambling, or robbery? Certainly in all such cases men are free agents; and, of course, must take the consequences with them. Man is

graciously free to choose the salvation of his soul and live, or reject it and perish. We say graciously free, because he is not naturally so since the fall. By reading the Holy Scriptures, we shall see that what no man has by nature, all have by grace—power to choose and accept life. "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly," Romans v, 6. "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that denying ungodliness, and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world," Titus ii, 11, 12. And this doctrine, while calculated to humble all men under a sense of their dependence, leaves them all without excuse, as Christ said, "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life."

Nor is our will destroyed, or in any wise impaired, by conversion, though it learns us obedience to Christ. Some think we are all free to come to Christ and be saved if we will; but when saved, our freedom is lost, and we are compelled to go to heaven whether we will or not. But vain is the attempt to blend conditional salvation and unconditional perseverance in the same creed. And they are consistent with themselves who say, "this perseverance of the saints depends upon the immutability of the decree of election:" we say consistent with themselves, but not with the Scriptures; for "by faith we stand." Paul teaches that a life of sin is a state of bondage, and a life of grace is a state of freedom; "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the law of sin and death." But where does he teach that regeneration destroys volition? We find not.

II. These words enjoin obedience—"Be thou faithful."

This implies that there has been an act of submission to the authority of Christ; that we have taken his yoke upon us, and we must now show our loyalty by a course of obedience; every one according to his several ability, and

the place he fills, keeping in view the words of Jesus, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you," and will be treated accordingly, as he assures us in these words: "And behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be."

III. They impose perseverance.

To persevere, is to continue in any pursuit or undertaking; and in matters of religion, perseverance is "continuance in well doing." In this sense, Paul used the term in his exhortation to the Ephesians, when he said, "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints." It has often been asked, whether we, as a people, hold to the perseverance of the saints? Certainly we do; for we think men should not only begin to serve God, but continue to serve him—not only get in the way to heaven, but follow it to the end, or "be faithful unto death;" and this is Bible preseverance. But says one, are you not, as a people, in favor of falling from grace? Not at all; so far from it, we think it exceedingly wrong to fall. We, indeed, believe in the possibility of many things that are wrong, and falling from grace is one of them. Our belief on these points may be briefly summed up thus: It is the privilege of every child of God to persevere to the end. It is his duty so to do; and if he do not, he will fall from grace, lose the divine favor, and become exposed to everlasting ruin.

To this it is objected, the ground taken is too strong; for though the saints may indeed commit sin, get back into the world, lose their comfort, and be beaten with many stripes, yet the Lord will not let them die in such a state of apostasy, but will certainly bring them in at the last. It may be answered, if this be true, the man who would live for ever, has only to become a backslider and so remain, and the Lord will never let him die. But where is it written

that apostasy is a certain remedy against death? Surely not in the Bible.

Again, it is objected, "It makes God a changeable being. He loves his child, and afterwards loves him not." We do not perceive the force of the argument; but we will give you another as good. Here then is a sinner, and the Lord is said to be angry with him; but he repents, believes, and gets converted, and the Lord is said to love him. Has the Lord changed? No, verily, but the man has changed; so in the other case.

"But how will you withstand the Scriptures?" says another. We do not intend to oppose them, or evade their force. When explained in their proper connection, they will all be found to harmonize with the doctrine now advanced.

Let us notice some texts which are supposed to teach the infallible perseverance of the saints. "Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her," Luke x, 42. This teaches that no power of men or demons can, by violence, deprive the Christian of his interest in Christ; but does it follow that he may not voluntarily part with it? Look at that old soldier! The government has given him a section of land, with a patent under the seal of the President; who shall take it from him? Not all the intrigues of litigants, nor sophistry of men, without his own consent; yet he may go to a tippling-shop, or gaming-house, and waste it all "with riotous living." In like manner, we are safe against all power while we trust in the Redeemer; but when we leave him for any consideration, we are deprived of our all. And Paul's persuasion (Romans viii, 38, 39) is of a piece with Mary's choice; for though no enemy could separate him from the love of God in Christ Jesus, yet he knew he could separate himself: hence, he says, "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means when I

have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away," 1 Corinthians ix, 27. Again, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand," John x, 27, 28. Take this text in its proper connection, and it is good testimony on our side of the question. "Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly, (v. 24.) Jesus answered them, I told you, but ye believed me not, because ye are not of my sheep, (v. 25, 26,) as I said unto you." "My sheep" are such as "hear my voice," in the Gospel, "and I know them," to be obedient, "and they follow me," in all my ordinances. And to these three characteristics he makes three promises: 1. "I give unto them eternal life:" not I have given, or will give, but in the present tense. I give, namely, as long as they hear my voice, so long I give unto them that eternal life which it conveys. 2. So long as "I know them" to be obedient, "they shall never perish." 3. So long as "they follow me," their shepherd, "none shall pluck them out of my hand." In other words, these three promises are made to Christ's sheep, and while they remain such they have a right to claim them; but if they forfeit that character, with it they forfeit the promises appertaining. So far, then, the proof of infallible perseverance fails, and when examined it will all fail.

Let us notice some proofs of the possibility of falling from grace. Passing, at present, the fall of Adam, the drunkenness of Noah, the incest of Lot, the transgressions of Saul, David, Solomon, and a host of other testimonies, we come to Ezekiel xxxiii, 18: "When the righteous turneth from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, he shall even die thereby." To say the prophet meant self-righteousness, would not be theologically correct;

for then he would represent the Lord as punishing the self-righteous for repenting of self-righteousness: nor logically correct; for self-righteousness is iniquity, and then man would turn from iniquity to iniquity, which would be charging the prophet with folly.

Let us now proceed to the New Testament, and see what Christ and his apostles taught on the subject. "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and trodden under foot of men," Matthew v, 13. Here Christ teaches that his disciples, who are good salt to the world, may become useless, and be thrown away. "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man," of course the man is clean; "he (the unclean spirit) walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house," the man's heart, "whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished," ready for his use. "Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first," Matthew xii, 43, 44, 45; because, before his conversion, he had one devil in him, but after he fell from grace, he had eight. Read Matthew xviii, 23–35, too long to copy at length—part of it is, "O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt," pardoned all thy sins, "because thou desiredst me: shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors," &c. Read Matthew xxiv, 45th to 51st verses inclusive: "Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing. Verily, I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over

all his goods. But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

We shall next notice some proofs that persons *have* fallen from grace. Paul said to the Galatians in positive terms, "Ye are fallen from grace." Again, he delivered a solemn charge to Timothy, to "war a good warfare; holding faith and a good conscience; which some having put away, concerning faith, have made shipwreck: of whom are Hymeneus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan," &c. Here Paul compares faith to a vessel, and grace, producing a good conscience, to its lading: but the vessel was wrecked—the cargo lost—the crew taken captive, and delivered to Satan; of course they were not his before. To enumerate all the plain proofs on this point, would make the discourse too long. The following texts afford clear testimony of the fact: "But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins," 2 Peter i. 9. "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again: and, The sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire," 2 Peter ii. 20, 21, 22. "I will therefore put you in remembrance, though

ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not. And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day," Jude, 5, 6.

Now, while the Scriptures inform us that the first man, made in the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness, fell; that many Old Testament saints fell; that Christ and his apostles often refer to those facts as examples for us to fear; that the righteous are warned as well as the wicked; that many of the first Christians fell, and made shipwreck of faith; and that even angels that kept not their first estate, but left their own habitations, are reserved in everlasting chains under darkness to the judgment of the great day, we shall believe that there is danger of falling as long as we are in our probationary state and candidates for heaven; and, consequently, shall exhort all saints to hold fast and repent, and strengthen the things that remain and are ready to perish. Take heed, lest ye fall. Continue in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

This perseverance is to be parallel with life "unto death," which may be far nearer than we are aware of. While vexing our souls with the thought that we cannot hold out so long, and through so many difficulties, the Lord may send for us. Then, if ready, our discharge will be honorable. We shall be transferred to the Church triumphant, and crowned with endless bliss, where all the pious and persevering of God's people, will meet to live in one city—abide in one house—have one Father—eat at one table, and sing one song—the song of glory to God and the Lamb for ever. Amen.

SERMON VIII.

TRIBULATION THE WAY TO THE KINGDOM.

DISCOURSE I.

"And that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God," Acts xiv, 22.

THERE is no condition in life, from the cottage to the palace, exempt from affliction and trial. Men of every class and every calling are heard to speak of the difficulties of life in general; and of those pertaining to their own circumstances in particular. Religion itself is not intended to exonerate us from difficulties and trials in this world, but to sustain us under them here, and deliver us for ever from them hereafter. Even Paul, the great apostle of the Gentiles, spake from experience, as well as inspiration, when he said, "We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." In proof of this, we refer to that part of his journal immediately preceding the text: "And there came thither certain Jews from Antioch, and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and having stoned Paul, drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead. Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and came into the city: and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe." The amount of this statement is, the Jews influenced the rabble to raise a mob, which beat Paul down in the street, dragged him beyond the corporation line, and left him, as they supposed, dead; but after they dispersed, the disciples gathered round him, lifted their hearts to God in prayer, and he rose up, came into the city, and next day departed with Barnabas to Derbe. "And when they had preached the Gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and to Antioch, confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."

We shall endeavor to show on this occasion,

I. What is meant by the kingdom of God.

The phrase kingdom of God, or kingdom of heaven, which is the same thing, as used by the inspired writers on some occasions, appears to mean the New Testament Church, of which Christ is the head and king; hence, the declaration of God by the Psalmist, "I have set my king upon my holy hill of Zion." To the same spiritual empire the Savior himself referred, when he said to Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world." This view of the subject is sustained by the opinion of Mr. Watson in his Biblical Dictionary, where, after showing that Christ's dominion was universal in one sense, he says, "But his kingdom primarily imports the Gospel Church, which is the subject of his laws, the seat of his government, and the object of his care; and being surrounded with powerful opposers, he is represented as ruling in the midst of his enemies." Christians are called "the children of the kingdom," which implies no inconsiderable privilege; for speaking of John the Baptist as a great prophet, Jesus said, "Notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven, is greater than he."

By the kingdom of God is sometimes meant experimental religion. It was unquestionably used in this sense by Paul to the Romans, when he said, "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." What a blessed kingdom is this, consisting of righteousness, or justification; peace with God, which that pardon secures; and joy in the Holy Ghost! In this sense, also, it is, that the apostle declares, "The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power;" by which we understand religion is a vital principle, regulating the affections of the heart, as outward laws influence the conduct of the life. The renovating influence of this religion upon the character of man, is well told by Paul to

the Corinthians in these words: "Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

In other places, the phrase, kingdom of God, is used to express the state of future glory and felicity of his children. The words of the Savior, recorded by St. Luke, are directly in point: "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God." This passage needs no comment, to show its reference to the future state. It will be fully realized when Christ comes to judge the world; and before him shall be gathered all nations, dividing to the right and left, according to their true character. "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

To be a subject of the kingdom of God in the first sense, namely, a member of the Christian Church, having access to all her ordinances, is certainly a great privilege; to be a subject of the kingdom in the second sense, that is, to enjoy heart-felt religion, having the kingdom of grace established within us, is a privilege still greater; but to be a subject of the kingdom in the last sense, crowned with everlasting life and glory in heaven, is the full and final consummation of all that can be desired.

II. It is through much tribulation we enter into the kingdom of God.

Tribulation is a stronger term than the common word trouble, and signifies sore trouble, or deep distress of mind; and, therefore, well expresses the scenes of affliction and sorrow through which we often pass in the Christian warfare. Through much of this sore trouble we have to enter

the kingdom; and this is true in whatever sense the kingdom of God is understood, as above described. If, by entering into the kingdom of God, be meant no more than becoming a member of the visible Church in an acceptable manner, then it is through much tribulation we enter in. "I cannot see that," says one; "it is a plain and easy transaction to unite with the Church, and if there be any difficulty in it, I cannot perceive it." Well, if you cannot see it, others can feel it operating so forcibly on their minds, as to keep them back for weeks, months, or years. Some serious, well disposed people seem to have difficulty in ascertaining whether such a step be really necessary or not. Hence, we hear them inquire if they cannot serve the Lord as well out of the Church as in it? No, they cannot. God's plan is better than ours; and his plan, as set forth in the New Testament, is to have a Church, and the people to be members of it. But if all were to adopt the principle of staying out of the Church, then there would be no Church; and, consequently, no ordinances, no Sabbath, no Gospel, no means of grace, nothing to sustain our civil institutions; and, of course, we would relapse into heathen idolatry and degradation.

Again, they ask, "Cannot we get to heaven without being members of the Church?" Perhaps under some circumstances you might—such as render it impracticable for you to comply with that requisition of the Gospel; but they have nothing to do with a man's duty in ordinary cases. Moreover, if you consult your interest and happiness, it would be more proper to inquire if joining the Church would be of any service, and if so, to act promptly; for certainly we need all the help we can obtain. And surely much is gained toward a life of piety, by being separated from irreligious and sinful associates, and united to those who are spiritually minded, helping each other to bear the cross and follow Jesus. Here we would say to you as

Moses said to his brother-in-law Hobab, "We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you: come thou with us, and we will do thee good: for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel."

Others are embarrassed with the difficulty of making a selection. There are so many branches of the general Church, each professing to be the soundest in doctrine, discipline and usage, that the superficial inquirer scarcely knows where to direct his course. One says to him, "This is the way, walk in it:" another says, "Nay, you have missed your road, come this way, ours is the best Church:" while a third denomination profess to be the only true Church, saying, "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are we;" and, of course, heathens all beside. While some are thus perplexed by proselyters, others are referring to the principles of their early education on this wise: "My mother was a member of the ——— Church;" and does that prove it to be the best Church? Certainly not. Another says, "My father always believed the doctrines of the ——— Church;" but was your father infallible? If not, his belief proves nothing conclusively on the subject. To all those who sincerely desire to know the right way, we beg leave to suggest two things: First, read the Bible carefully, and by it try those various systems of faith and practice, marking the practical result of each, and the actual amount of good done by them, and in view of the whole, make up the best judgment you can, with the helps afforded you; and, secondly, give conscience fair play, deal honestly with your own soul, and join that Church in which you verily believe you can serve God best, and make surest work for heaven. Observe, we do not say where you will be the most popular with the irreligious, have the fewest crosses to bear and duties to perform, the least persecution to suffer, and most liberty of conforming to the principles, practices, and fashions of the

world; but we say, join where you conscientiously believe you can serve God most acceptably, and most effectually secure your final salvation. Do these two things, and we have no fear of the result.

There is another class of serious people, who allow it is right to be in the Church and conform to her rules, and they have no difficulty in determining what Church would suit them best, but they are troubled with the fear of their own unfitness. This is a matter worthy of due consideration, and one on which men entertain a great variety of opinions. Two things on this subject are so plain as to be admitted by all: one, that a converted man is a fit subject of Church membership; and the other, that a careless, impenitent sinner is unfit for Church membership. But there is a third character, about the claims of which Christians are not so well agreed: namely, the humble seeker of religion, who has not yet obtained any evidence of a saving change, but is truly awakened to see his lost condition, sincerely penitent for all his sins, and determined to break them off by righteousness, and is earnestly seeking salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. It is very natural for such a one to feel himself unworthy of a place among Christians; but what is the Church for, but to bring glory to God by making men better and more happy? We do not say that this mourner in Zion is fit for heaven without conversion, nor do we contend that he is as good as he might or ought to be; but we say, he is a fit subject of prayer and instruction and encouragement in seeking his soul's salvation; and that in the Church is the proper place to look for all these things, and that he should have access to the means of grace. To this end, our Church would admit such a seeker on trial: not to tell him that because he desires to be saved, therefore he is saved; nor to persuade him that he has a hope, while he knows himself to

be in the gall of bitterness and the bonds of iniquity, but to encourage and help him in seeking salvation.

To say that the earnest seeker of salvation should not be admitted to the means of grace until he is saved from sin, is as unreasonable as to say an ignorant child should not be sent to school until he has finished his education, or a hungry man should not eat till he is sufficed, or a sick man should not take medicine till he is first cured. Who needs the means of grace more than the broken-hearted sinner, and where are those means but in the Church? The notion of building up a Church, composed exclusively of converted souls, who can never fall away, so as to perish, has not yet been realized in any age, as it is manifest that in every Church, the first Christian society not excepted, some have become final apostates, which shows that they were received in an unregenerate state, or that they subsequently fell from grace; and, we think, such a Church never will exist on earth, because the plan of it is absurd in itself. If called on for money to establish a seminary of learning, in which none should be admitted as scholars but those who had learned all man could teach them, and never could forget what they knew, you would decline giving any thing for such an institution on the ground of its being useless; and yet men will lend their influence to build up a Church which professes to proceed on the principle of receiving no members, except such as have the knowledge of God in the remission of sins, and never can forget that they were purged from their old sins, so as to perish. But if all this be so, these members will be saved in heaven, whether in the Church or out of it; and, therefore, any Church, so far as they are concerned, is useless. Again, suppose ye were called on to aid in building a hospital for the benefit of such only as had been sick and had recovered, and never could relapse so as to be in danger of dying, would ye not refuse to aid in such an enterprise

on the ground of its being useless? And what think ye of a Church, which professes to be composed only of such as have been sick of sin, and have been already healed by the heavenly Physician, and never can relapse into sin so as to be lost? Here again, we say, if all this be so, then such persons will be certainly saved at last, Church or no Church; and, consequently, building up such a Church is lost labor, so far as it regards them.

On the contrary, we take the ground that this life is a state of probation, in which men are required to prepare for the life to come; that God has concluded all under sin, that he might have mercy on all, by giving his Son to die for them, and his Spirit to strive with them, and that when they are awakened and brought by grace under repentance, they should be encouraged by all means. A seminary, to be generally useful, should be adapted to all classes of learners; and if the Church, which is the school of Christ, would be extensively useful, she must receive not only those who are wise unto salvation, but also such as are learning the first principles of the doctrine of Christ. The hospital, to be of any important use, must receive the afflicted, poor, and unfortunate; and the Church, which is the grand Gospel hospital for a world of diseased sinners, should admit all sin-sick souls, who, sensibly feeling their ruined condition, sincerely desire and earnestly seek the balm of Gilead and the Physician there; or, in other words, those who desire to be healed through faith in the blood of the Lamb. Christ invites such as labor and are heavy laden to come to him, take his easy yoke, and learn of him, with the promise of rest to their souls. He pronounces a blessing upon the poor in spirit and them that mourn, and will in no wise cast out them who come unto him; and shall the Church turn off such as Christ receives? We trust not. It is at least matter of rejoicing with us to know, there is a Church whose doors are open to returning

prodigals and humble penitents; that she will receive such cordially as probationers for membership in the Church below and the Church above, and afford them all the help in her power, to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling, while God works in them to will and to do of his good pleasure. We know that some think it is a great sin to join the Church before we are converted; but facts and experience contradict their theory. In our Church we all join first on trial, whether converts or seekers; but many of us, and your unworthy servant among the rest, joined only as seekers on trial, and shortly afterward found peace in believing, and joy in the Holy Ghost; and from all we have seen, heard and felt on the subject for many years, we still believe that in the Church is the best place to get converted, and the best place to stay converted. In confirmation of this doctrine, we may be allowed to say, and we do it without boasting, there is no Church, a larger proportion of whose members enjoy the life and power of religion, than the Methodist Episcopal Church, notwithstanding most of them were received on trial before they obtained any evidence of saving change. These are facts known to all who have eyes to see, ears to hear, and hearts to feel; and facts too not easily set aside by human theories and speculations.

There is another class of hopeful penitents, whose tribulation arises, chiefly, from a fear that they shall not be able to hold out to the end, if received into the Church; and who, consequently, hesitate about making the trial, lest having run well for a season, they should faint by the way, have to turn back, and their last state should be worse than the first. It is well enough to count the cost of any great enterprise before we engage in it, but not to neglect our duty altogether on account of difficulties, nor yet to defer it so as to endanger our best interest. That there are some difficulties connected with a life of piety is readily

admitted, but they bear no comparison with the glorious prize which awaits us at the end of the race; and grace to sustain us under all these difficulties, is freely promised us as long as we trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. Beside, to decline forming any connection with the Church for fear of not persevering to the end, is only shunning one difficulty to encounter a greater. Whether in the Church or out of it, we must not only set out for heaven, but persevere till we get there, or be undone for ever; and the question to be settled is, which affords us the greater help and prospect of success in leading a religious life and preparing for heaven, the Church or the world? Let the Bible, let the experience of those who have tried both, answer, and then act accordingly, by flying from the world as from a deadly enemy, to the strong holds of Zion for refuge.

Another source of tribulation to those who sometimes think seriously of uniting with the Church, is, the fear of opposition from those without. There may be some difficulty in breaking off old associations, and to do so requires moral courage; but there is no insurmountable obstruction in the way. In some cases the difficulty is more imaginary than real. Possibly, while we are speaking on the subject, one is saying to himself, "What would my neighbor and friend think, if I were to go forward and join myself to the Lord's people?" Indeed, it is of very little consequence what he would think or say in comparison of your soul's everlasting welfare. Moreover, in this you are not alone; for while you feel yourself a sinner, and think of reforming, others feel and think the same way. Perhaps your next friend there is saying to himself, "What would *you* think, if he were to come out on the Lord's side?" Thus, ye may stand in each others' way till one sets the example, and then others may follow. It is true, however, that, in other cases, there may be real opposition, not from friends, (for no one is your friend who opposes

you in doing your duty to God and yourself,) but from acquaintances, and even relatives; still the opposition may be overcome, borne, or removed. Such as have this sort of open, violent opposition to contend with, may take courage from this consideration, "He that is for us, is greater than all that can be against us." Only be humble, faithful, and persevering, and the Lord whom you serve will open your way clear before you. How the Lord will remove the hindrance and open the way, we know not, nor is it any part of our business to know what means he will adopt to accomplish the object; it may be he will convert your opposers, or soften down their prejudices; or if they continue obstinate, he may cut them off suddenly without remedy. Indeed, you should both pray and hope for their salvation, and not for their destruction; but suppose you should finally fail, must you submit to go with them to destruction, because they refuse to go with you to heaven? Is it not madness to go to hell for the sake of company? We speak as unto wise men, judge ye what we say.

Once more, there are serious individuals who seem to be greatly perplexed on the subject of joining the Church, because they think some of those already members are unworthy, and to be identified with them in Church fellowship would be a condescension! We would advise such to look round upon the state of society with whom they are now identified out of the Church, where we could show them ten hypocrites for every one they can point out in the Church, at least in that part of the general Church with which we are acquainted; and, further, we would advise them to get clear of all bad characters in their own community, before they object to the Church on the ground that some of her members are unworthy. That we are not all as good in the Church as we ought to be is readily admitted, still we doubt whether it is half as bad with us as you imagine; it may be you have formed your opinion

of us in part through the misrepresentation of our enemies. But suppose, for the sake of the argument, your impression is correct, that among the thousands of our Israel there are some hypocrites, carry out your principles and see where you will end. When these hypocrites die, they will go down quick into hell, and if you stay out of the Church and neglect your religious duty on their account, when you die, you will go down quick into hell with them; thus, instead of shunning bad company on your principles, you will be associated with it world without end. David says, "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace. But the transgressors shall be destroyed together: the end of the wicked shall be cut off." This text, while it refers you to the final consequence of your present course of opposition to the Church on the ground of disorderly membership, also suggests an effectual way of escape: join the Church, and see to it that you act the part of a perfect and upright man, let others do as they may, and your end shall be peace, and you shall obtain a place in the Church above, where none but the pure in heart will be admitted—so shall you be clear of hypocrites for ever. In the meantime the Church as it is, though she might be far better, is good enough for the best of us; and any individual, however high his standing among men, should regard it as a great privilege and honor to have a name on her roll and a seat at her altar.

It is possible we have been rather tedious on this part of the subject; if so, its importance must be our apology. We trust, at least, enough has been said to show, satisfactorily, that if by entering into the kingdom of God, be meant no more than uniting with the visible Church of Christ, then it is through much tribulation that we enter into that kingdom.

And as it would render the subject too tedious to embody it all in one discourse, and as it is of too much importance

to be left unfinished, we will here close for the present, reserving the remainder of what we have to say thereon for another discourse.

SERMON IX.

TRIBULATION THE WAY TO THE KINGDOM.

DISCOURSE II.

"And that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God," Acts xiv, 22.

It will be recollected that in our first discourse on this subject, we showed the kingdom of God to be a phrase which sometimes means the Gospel Church, of which Christ is head and king; that in other places it means experimental religion; and again that it signifies, in some places, the future state of bliss and glory, reserved for the saints of light above. Our second proposition was to illustrate the fact here stated, that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God. We had progressed so far as to show, that if by entering into the kingdom of God implies no more than becoming a member of the Church, according to the first definition of the term kingdom, then it is through much tribulation we succeed.

The next thing in the order of the subject, is to show, that if by entering into the kingdom of God be understood, getting converted, or becoming the subject of experimental religion, or being "translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son," then it is through much tribulation we enter that kingdom. Conversion, in all cases, is preceded by conviction, a painful sense of our naturally fallen and lost condition, and of our guilt as personal transgressors, and of our consequent exposure to the wrath of God, and of our own entire helplessness. This important part of the work of grace in the sinner's heart is

wrought by the agency of the Holy Spirit, causing the word of God to be quick and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword, laying open to his view the exceeding sinfulness of his nature and of his ungodly life, and the consequent necessity of being "born again," before he can be admitted into the presence of a thrice holy God. Thus, conviction is attended with much tribulation, with great mental distress, insomuch that the subject of it is ready to apply in his own case what Job said in his extremity of pain, "For the arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit: the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me." And this distress of the awakened soul is frequently increased by a fear of being rejected at the mercy seat, because he is for the present much more impressed with his sin and misery, and the punishment which he deserves, than he is with a view of that ample provision of mercy which the Gospel freely tenders in such cases. In many instances, this fear borders on despair itself, especially if the subject has previously been enlightened so as to see his danger; and has made resolutions to reform, and has broken them, in which case he is apt to be tormented with the thought that his day of grace is ended, that the promises do not apply to him at all; but, on the contrary, that all the divine threatenings are aimed against him as one of the worst offenders. Indeed, it would be nothing new under the sun, if he should take to himself the words of Paul to the rebellious Hebrews, "For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries." Still, in this point, he is mistaken. It is his privilege to prove experimentally, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

But placing the subject of this work on the most favorable ground, he must at least pass through the pangs of the new birth, in order to enter into the kingdom of God in the sense now under consideration, namely, so as to enjoy righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. And is it a small matter to feel those throes of sorrow and those struggles of heart to believe, which are necessarily connected with that work of the Spirit, by which we become "dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord?" No, verily. The fact of the inspired writers having to make constant use of such figures as are drawn from our creation, birth, death and resurrection, to illustrate this change of heart, so essential to our happiness, shows it to be one of vast importance and of glorious import, and one which cannot be wrought in us without materially affecting our feelings. It greatly excites the mind, and not unfrequently agitates the body too; and the idea of any person undergoing this change without knowing it, is altogether too unreasonable to be entertained by any intelligent Christian.

While we contend that the regeneration of our nature is preceded and attended with much tribulation, we readily admit at the same time, that some individuals manifest external signs of stronger mental excitement than others, in passing from the death of sin to a life of holiness. This difference may be owing in part to variety of character among the subjects of conversion, as it regards constitutional make, education, and habit; and to the goodness and condescension of God, who, not being willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance and live, accommodates his manner of working to the weakness and misery of man, so as to be effectual in all cases. And there may be other causes entirely beyond our comprehension in the present state of things. But after all, the difference in the real amount of suffering experienced by

the several subjects of converting grace, is probably less than is generally supposed. One is brought up in total ignorance and neglect of all religious obligation, and continues for a long series of years a constant course of impiety and rebellion, during which he neither fears God nor regards man; and though it might be expected that God would make him an example of punishment for others to fear, he makes him an example of the mercy and power of saving grace. The conversion of such a man, if effected at all, is generally instantaneous, bordering on the miraculous, because no other mode of working would probably prove successful in his case. The light of truth is shed at once on his mind by the Holy Spirit, showing him his true condition as a sinner; his sins surprise him as suddenly and unexpectedly as he would be startled by thunder without a cloud, with a sense of which he is so overwhelmed as to fall powerless to the ground; and being conquered he surrenders at once, throws himself entirely on the mercy of God, and after a struggle of perhaps only a few hours is created anew in Christ Jesus. The deliverance in such cases is usually as instantaneous and clear, as the distress that preceded was sudden and overpowering. Very many conversions, similar to this, are recorded in the New Testament, as in the cases of Saul, of the jailer, and of the people on the day of Pentecost, &c.

On the other hand, we see an individual who has been taught to fear God and respect the ordinances of religion from childhood. He cannot recollect the time when he was without conviction for sin, and the most that can be said against him is, he lives in the neglect of experimental and practical godliness. Now, it is not probable he will ever feel that sudden and pungent conviction described in the other case, because it is not necessary, as he already knows his duty and the consequence of neglecting it. His repentance unto salvation will be a gradual work, attended with

many fears of self-deception, because he is not wrought on more powerfully—many struggles with unbelief, and much distress on account of the hardness of his heart, and many reproofs of conscience for sinning against so much light and knowledge; and when his distress passes off, to be succeeded by religious joy, it will probably be in the same gradual manner. He will first recognize the morning star of hope, then the twilight of peace, and finally the Sun of righteousness will shed the full rays of heavenly light upon his soul, to give him the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ shining unto him. In the first case the distress of mind was greater for a short time, because it was concentrated into the narrow compass of a few hours; and in the second case the distress was less severe at any one time, because it was spread over the space of months or years; but upon the whole, it is questionable whether the latter did not really suffer as much tribulation in entering the kingdom of God as the former. The extreme anguish of the one, which suspended his bodily functions, produced coldness of extremities, and caused his breast to heave with sorrow, was soon over; but the tribulation of the other, like a wasting consumption, preyed on him for months or years before he found the healing balm of mercy. But the evidence of the change may be as certain and satisfactory in one case as the other; and whether we get converted in a day or year is of but little consequence, so we get the blessing and retain it to the end.

It now remains for us to show, if by entering into the kingdom of God be meant getting to heaven, then it is still true that we must through much tribulation enter that kingdom. This life is our state of trial, and no one, it is presumed, continues long on earth after conversion, without proving the truth of the Savior's words, "In the world ye shall have tribulation." Though in the Church, and con-

verted too, the Christian's warfare is but just commenced; fightings without and fears within may be expected. While we strive to walk in Christ as we have received him, the world, the flesh and Satan, will all make war upon us, and we shall have to wrestle, not only with flesh and blood, but also with principalities, and powers, and spiritual wickedness in high places, and with the rulers of the darkness of this world; but God will teach our hands to war and our fingers to fight; and if faithful to the grace given, we shall conquer through the blood of the Lamb, and come off more than conquerors through him that loved us.

After all other difficulties are passed, then comes death, the latest foe to man, when we expect, as soldiers of the cross, to fight our last battle, and gain the laurel of final victory; not in our own name, but in the name and strength of Jesus, who has destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. When or where, or by what means we shall be brought into conflict with death, is uncertain; but come when he will, and as he may, we trust to have supporting grace in the trying hour. Yes, blessed be God, we hope Jesus will be there to hold up our sinking heads and soothe our breaking hearts, so that we shall be enabled to say, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

III. We shall conclude by noticing some considerations which ought to resign us to all this tribulation.

One very material consideration is, this sore trouble through which we are destined to enter into the kingdom of God, is all intended by our heavenly Father for our good in the end. Frequently, we fear too frequently, Christians are wont to indulge in railing accusations against the world in which Providence has placed us. We complain of it as

a world of toil and disappointment, vexation and sorrow, affliction and death, all of which may be true; still it is the only world we were ever yet in, and the best one we ever shall be in, unless we improve the gracious privileges afforded us here, so as to become holy in heart, in life, and in all manner of conversation. With all our objections to this world, how prone are we to love it too much; and if we had no tribulation in it, would we ever once think seriously of preparing to leave it? We fear not. But our tribulation is a part of that system of discipline, by which our heavenly Father is training us for a higher and better state of being; and though our affliction and sorrow do not seem pleasant to us, apart from future considerations, still they are all administered in love; "And we know that all things work together for good, to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

But suppose it were otherwise, and no future benefit could be expected from all our afflictions, still we have less tribulation in getting to the kingdom of God, than sinners have in going to hell. Solomon said, "The way of transgressors is hard." It is hard indeed from beginning to end, or rather without end. It is hard to contend with the influence of religious education, and the entreaties of pious friends—hard to resist the overpowering eloquence of the Gospel, and influence of the Holy Spirit, which plead directly to the heart—hard to resist the claims of God's violated law, and the remonstrance of a guilty conscience—hard to endure the horrors of a sinner's death-bed scene, and the terrors of the general judgment—hard to be turned into the lake of fire and brimstone, and stay there for ever; and there is one thing harder still, the thought of having willfully rejected Christ and chosen death in the error of their way: this will be worse than all the chains of bondage, prisons of darkness, frightful spirits, deathless worms, and quenchless fires, in the abodes of endless

despair. We say then, great as is our tribulation in getting to heaven, that of the wicked in getting to hell is still greater. If we go to destruction, we shall have tribulation all the way, and then world without end; if we go to heaven, we can but have tribulation for a season, and then comes deliverance full and final, to be followed by endless life and glory.

Again, our tribulation in entering the kingdom of God is less than that of other and better people who have gone before us. If any one doubts this, let him read the history of God's ancient worthies, as set forth by Paul to the Hebrews: "And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth." If this does not remove his doubts, let him read the history of the martyrs in the dark ages preceding the Reformation; who were broken on wheels, thrown to wild beasts in the theatre, wrapped in raw-hides and worried with dogs, had their flesh torn off by piece-meal with red hot pincers, or were tied to the stake and roasted alive; and when we remember these things, let us blush at the thought of complaining of our little trials in this land of peace and liberty.

Finally, all the tribulation we ever have to suffer as the children of God, will be in this short life, and the time of deliverance is drawing nigh. This is what reconciles us to our tribulation, buoys our spirits above the waves of sorrow, nerves our arm in the day of battle with the powers of darkness, inspires us with patience under lingering affliction, and enables us to survey the silent tomb with composure. In view of the prospect of final deliver-

ance, we hope to obey, cheerfully, the summons to leave this land of exile and death, and repair to our Father's house above, and mingle with all those who come out of great tribulation, and wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. And surely, brethren, we shall then be more than rewarded, though "we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."

SERMON X.

HOPE.

"Hope thou in God," Psalm xlii, 11.

PERHAPS there are few words, if any, in more common use among us, than the term *hope*. People of all classes, wise, ignorant, learned and simple, use it on all occasions, and in reference to all subjects. And yet, if we may judge from the misapplications made of it, there are but few words less understood, as we shall probably see in the progress of the discourse. Peter once gave his persecuted brethren this important advice, "And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye; and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear." And that we also may be able to do the same thing more readily, we shall now endeavor to show,

I. The meaning of the word hope.

II. The object of hope.

III. The marks of a true hope as distinguished from a false one.

I. Hope is often used to mean no more than a mere wish or desire. Thus, when our friend is sick, apparently unto

death, we say, "We do not think he will live, but we hope he may;" that is, we wish for, or desire it. Or, if a man professes religion, and does not live accordingly, we say, "We fear he is not a good man, but we hope he is;" namely, we desire it may be made so to appear. But this is an improper use of the term.

Hope means desire and expectation; and nothing is properly a subject of hope, unless we expect as well as desire it. The zealous Christian desires that every human being may be saved; but from circumstances surrounding him, he does not expect, and therefore does not hope for such a glorious event. Again, sinners expect to die, but they do not desire, and therefore do not hope to die. But the faithful husbandman that ploughs, sows and cultivates, hopes to reap the fruit of his toil, by the blessing of God upon his labor; that is, he both desires and expects it. So the faithful Christian hopes or desires and expects to have "his fruit unto holiness, and the end thereof everlasting life."

Hope always implies a want of possession respecting the things hoped for. Thus Paul says, "For we are saved by hope. But hope that is seen, is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." Hence, the Scriptures show, as well as the meaning of the word, that no man hopes for what he enjoys; for hope looks forward. A poor man hopes, that by the use of industry and economy, he shall acquire the comforts of life; but when he obtains them, he no longer hopes for, but possesses and enjoys them. A traveler on his way to Washington, hopes to reach the city; but after he arrives, he does not hope to get there, for he knows he is there. The application is easy. The penitent sinner hopes to receive the pardon of his sins, and the love of God shed abroad in his heart; but when he receives these blessings, they cease to be the

objects of his hope, and become the objects of his enjoyment: and being now a Zion traveler, he hopes to get to heaven; but after he gets to heaven,

> "There faith is sweetly lost in sight,
> And hope in full fruition dies,
> And all his soul is love."

Hope implies a possibility of attaining to the object hoped for; for where there is no possibility, hope flies, and despair ensues. For illustration, we hope to see to-morrow, which is possible, but we do not hope to see yesterday, which is impossible; so an awakened and penitent sinner hopes his future days may be employed in the service of God, which is possible, but does not hope that his past life, devoted to the world and sin, will be so employed in God's service, which is impossible.

If the view we have taken of the subject be correct, as we think it is, does it not follow, that there has been a very general misuse of the term hope, and that too in all circles of society? Even men professedly learned have published, habitually, in their periodicals, accounts of revivals of religion, which they conclude, by saying, substantially, "As the fruits of this revival —— persons have obtained a hope." A hope of what? If they mean that the individuals referred to, having got their souls converted, have now a hope of getting to heaven, it is well enough; but if they mean that they have obtained a hope that they are brought out of the darkness, bondage, and guilt of sin, into the light, liberty, and peace of the Gospel, it is only darkening counsel with words without knowledge. Religious enjoyment either is, or is not, a subject of knowledge. If it be a subject of knowledge, as the sacred writers abundantly affirm, then it is not a subject of hope, for hope is desire and expectation of some future good; and if it be not a subject of knowledge, then it is of no consequence whether we have it or not. We say, if the difference

between being happy in God, and being miserable in sin, is so little that we cannot know it, the fair conclusion is, that it is by no means important which state we are in. And if such are the perversions which the professedly learned make of the word hope, it is not at all strange that their more simple followers should so generally adopt the error. Hence, it is, that some professors of religion have a hope, that they enjoy a hope; and others are "hoping for a hope," which properly means, they are desiring and expecting that they shall some day obtain a desire and an expectation! After all, we wish not to condemn them for the improper use of a word; but we do wish, if possible, to turn a pure language upon Zion, by ascertaining and fixing the meaning of a plain Scripture word.

II. The object of our hope: "Hope thou in God," whom the prophet in another place calls, "the Hope of Israel," and who is suitable for us to fix our hope in, on many accounts. And, first, because he is a God of infinite perfections, whose illimitable wisdom discovers to him what is good and proper for his creatures; whose omnipotence enables, and whose unchangeable goodness disposes him, at all times, to perform what his wisdom directs to be done: insomuch, that if there be any failure in our happiness, it is not chargeable to "the Hope of Israel," but to our refusal of his blessings on the terms he proposes.

What God has done for us, is another reason why we should hope in him. But who can number the loving kindnesses of our God, to whom we are indebted for life and all its comforts here, as well as all our future hopes and prospects? Among the mercies of God, and above all others, is, "the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;" for "herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." What wondrous love is this! Paul reasons well on this subject, when he says, "He that spared not his

own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Surely, my brethren, here are strong grounds to sustain our hope in God.

Another ground of hope in God is, what he hath promised to do for his people—for all who will trust in him; which may be summed up in this, "My grace is sufficient for them." Sufficient in every case; and the greater the difficulties of God's people, the more interesting will hope appear. Like an anchor, it is the most useful in a storm; or like an ever-green, it appears most lovely when all things else are dead. The experience of David well accords with this view of the subject: "As with a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me; while they say daily unto me, Where is thy God? Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God."

III. The marks of a true hope, as distinguished from a false one. All have hopes of some kind or other. The idea of endless misery is so intolerable, that no one can reconcile it to his mind to endure it; and as a drowning man would catch at a straw, so do sinners of all sorts grasp their false hopes for relief. Thus, an atheist may work himself up into a hope that there is no God to take cognizance of his impieties; the deist, that the Bible is a fable, and that he will not be held responsible for his conduct; the Universalist, that there is no punishment after death; the better informed sinner, who believes the doctrines of revelation, but has never yet complied with their requisitions, that at some future day he will obtain salvation, though he does not seek it; the backslider, that he will yet be brought in, though he seems quite contented without; the carnal professor, that he will be made holy, though he seeks not to be better. But "the hope of the hypocrite

shall perish," saith the Almighty; and "the hope of the sinner is as the giving up of the ghost;" for as the spirit leaves the body in death, so will all these hopes leave their deluded votaries for ever.

The hope of the Gospel is not only well founded, as we have seen, but it may be known by the following Scriptural marks: It is purifying in its nature; for Paul says, "We are saved by hope." The desire and expectation of being finally delivered from sin and its consequences, leads us to seek and obtain that deliverance. And John says, "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he (Christ) is pure." Vain then are the hopes of any to be happy in the next world, who seek not to be saved from sin in this life.

It is a lively hope: "Thanks be to God, who hath begotten us again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead," a strong desire and a strong expectation of eternal life, animating us to press on with ardor for it.

It is a blissful hope; for we "rejoice in hope of the glory of God." And superficial, indeed, is our religion, when it does not make us happy; for the faithful believer rejoices "with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

The Gospel hope is a patient, persevering hope; hence, we are to abound "in the patience of hope." We are to gird up our minds, "and hope to the end;" yea, to "retain the rejoicing of our hope firm to the end."

The Gospel "hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us:" wherefore, he that is ashamed of Christ and his ordinances, though the world may persecute him, is destitute of the true Gospel hope of future bliss, and unworthy of his Master, by whose name he is called; for when our hearts are right, we "glory not save in the cross of Christ." In a word, the

hope of the Gospel is *purifying, lively, blissful, patient and persevering, and maketh not ashamed.*

Well may the Christian's hope be called a glorious hope; for it is like "an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the vail," not the vail of the tabernacle, but of heaven, "where the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus," our all in all. Let others seek their glory in the mansions of fame, or the fields of carnage; but, as one has said, "Our hope is not reared in earthly palaces; it dwells in the sanctuary of God; does not harness the chariot of conquest, nor spread the canopy of empire; but lives at the sick man's bed, and kneels down at the side of the tomb." "The righteous hath hope in his death." And the hope we have in Jesus, cheers our lonesome hours, strengthens the weary and heavy laden, dries up the flowing tears of the lonely widow and her disconsolate orphans, brings the bread of life to the hungry poor, and enriches them with "gold tried in the fire;" softens the blows of affliction, hushes the storm of tribulation, pours the balm of love into the wounded spirit, lights the weary pilgrim to his grave, stands as his faithful sentinel till the morning of the resurrection, clothes him with the habiliments of immortality, and introduces him to the marriage supper of the Lamb, to regale himself with fruits which grow on the tree of life, where he may eat and live for ever. Lord, evermore give us this hope, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SERMON XI.

THE CONNECTION OF THE GRACES.

"And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed: because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us," Romans v, 3, 4, 5.

In the third chapter of this epistle, Paul proves to the Romans, the fallen state of all men, without regard to national distinction. The picture which he draws of the heart and life of man is so strong and impressive, that we may safely leave it without note or comment, to speak for itself. "What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; as it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable: there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood. Destruction and misery are in their ways: and the way of peace have they not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes. Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin."

Having established the doctrine of man's depravity, the apostle next proceeds to show clearly, that though the Gentile could not be justified before God by the law of nature, nor the Jew by the law of Moses, yet both might

be justified freely through faith in Christ. This argument, found in the latter part of the third and running through the fourth chapter, sets the subject before us in an encouraging light, placing the pardon of sin and the consolation of grace on ground at once easy and suited to our helpless condition. It may be proper to add here, that the faith which secures these most desirable blessings, is such as embraces Christ fully as an all-sufficient Savior, and trusts in him exclusively as our only hope of obtaining mercy.

To encourage us in the exercise of this faith, and furnish us with certain tests by which we may know when we possess it, Paul next presents us with a summary view of the privileges and blessings of the justified state in these words: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." All these benefits are the fruits of saving faith, enjoyed by every true believer, and are conferred in the same order in which they are here expressed; namely, "Peace with God:" * * * "access by faith into this grace wherein we stand," or by which we are enabled to stand firm amidst all opposition, "and rejoice in hope of the glory of God," to be revealed in the saints hereafter in heaven, the contemplation and prospect of which render us exceeding joyful, even in the house of our pilgrimage. Now this assemblage of covenant blessings presented at one view to the eye of faith, is to the Christian, in his probationary state, what the clusters of grapes, ripe and sweet, from the valley of Eshcol, were to the Israelites, when journeying through the wilderness to the land of promise—a delightful foretaste of a better inheritance.

The apostle, as though he anticipated that some one was just about to introduce the objection, "Christians have affliction and trouble like other men," adds, "And not only

so, but we glory in tribulations also." *Tribulation* is sore trouble, or deep distress of mind. To *glory in tribulations*, is to take delight in them. But how men can take delight in sore trouble, is certainly worthy of serious consideration, as one of the mysteries of godliness; best understood by those who walk in newness of life. "We glory in tribulations," not on account of what they are in themselves, but on account of the benefits resulting therefrom. No man in his right mind ever does choose any evil of any kind, knowing it to be such, for the sake of that evil, but for the sake of some real or supposed advantage; though he may, and often does, submit to a smaller evil to avoid a greater one, or to a present evil for the sake of future good. It is in the same light we understand the apostle: we glory in tribulations, not because we love them for their own sake, but because they afford evidence of our being disciples of Jesus, who said to his followers, "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer: I have overcome the world." Paul said, too, "We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." When the Christian is beset with sore trouble, it is pleasant for him to reason thus: The children of God inherit tribulation, but I have tribulation, therefore, I am a child of God. Again, "whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth;" but I am chastened, therefore the Lord loves me. And the revenue which he raises from his tribulation, is increased by the anticipation of being associated in heaven with those "which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

We glory in tribulation, not only as affording evidence of discipleship, but also as a condition of receiving our final inheritance. Paul said to his son Timothy, "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us;" that is, Christ will deny us at the last day. There is a very express testimony on this point in

the 8th chapter of Romans. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs: heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon, that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." From these authorities it is clear, that suffering with Christ as his disciples, is a condition of our being glorified with him. It is presumed, we all desire to be glorified with the Savior and his people in heaven; but if we would reign with him, we must be willing to suffer with him in the spirit of the apostles, who "departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name."

Again, "we glory in tribulations" as means of increasing our future felicity. Like the earthly warrior, who gathers laurels of honor, not from feasting in the tent with his friends, but from hard campaigns, perilous battles, and patiently enduring his toils and sufferings, the soldier of the cross derives a revenue from his persecutions, conflicts, and tribulations. This is a wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort. "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

Another reason for glorying in tribulation is assigned on the face of the text, "Knowing that tribulation worketh patience." *Patience* signifies endurance under trials. If we are overtaken by providential affliction, and submit to it with resignation, this is patience; or if we be persecuted and insulted by the enemies of the truth, and bear it with meekness, that is patience. There is no grace of the

Spirit for which we have more frequent use than "the patience of the saints," because we are daily and hourly exposed to difficulties and trials of one sort or other. The advice of St. James is good: "Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy." The end which the Lord had in view was not Job's destruction, but his benefit; for his last days were better than his first days; "And the Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before." Beside the benefit which accrued to himself, Job's example of patience under extraordinary suffering, has been the occasion of bringing much glory to God, and good to man.

"Tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience." *Experience* means proof from trial, and is the result of experiment. A man may read the Scriptures, and hear them expounded until he forms a tolerable idea of the general theory of Christianity, and still be a stranger to the vital principle of religion; but when he reduces his knowledge to practice, prays, repents, believes, receives pardon, and becomes regenerated by the Spirit of God, is "born again," then he understands the subject experimentally. The term experience is also used to signify knowledge derived from practice. Thus, by practice, a man becomes an experienced mariner, teacher, physician, or preacher, which gives him a great advantage over beginners in the same calling. In like manner, any one having the advantage of long continued practice in the duties and difficulties of our holy religion, may become an experienced Christian. He learns how to solve many questions of conscience once

too deep for him, and becomes acquainted with many wiles of the enemy of souls to which he was at first a stranger.

By the rule of experience every man may test the truth of the Bible for himself. Our Savior said, "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." Now, is it not worth the trial, seeing there is every thing to be gained, and nothing to be lost, by making the experiment? Millions have tried it, and proved God's record true; while seeking the Lord in earnest prayer, and with humble reliance upon the Savior, they "tasted the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost." You too may do the same; for Jesus said, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened." By this simple rule a child may test the truth of the sacred Scriptures, and confound a learned opponent. It is true, infidels may out-talk us on abstract questions, and even laugh at the idea of a man's feeling religion; but none of these things move us: "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself."

"Tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope." Here is a happy community of the graces of the Spirit, each subserving the interest of the others. The more tribulation we suffer, the more is patience tried; and the more patience is called into requisition, the more experience we have; and the more experience we obtain, the stronger becomes our hope of heaven. *Hope* being a compound of desire and expectation, always has reference to future good. Some of the good things for which the Christian hopes, are, supporting grace through life, and consolation in death; that his blood-washed spirit will be received into paradise, and his flesh "may rest in

hope" till the morning of the general resurrection; that he will then awake with the likeness of the glorified humanity of Christ, and obtain an abundant admittance into the everlasting kingdom of God.

"And hope maketh not ashamed: because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." Is it any cause of shame to be the children of God by the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, "Abba, Father?" Shall we be ashamed of the great author of our being and well-being? of the manifestations of his love? of the agent which communicates it to our hearts, that is, the Holy Ghost? or of the pure and dignified channel through which it flows—the mediation of our Lord Jesus Christ?

> "No, when I blush, be this my shame,
> That I no more revere his name."

There are several considerations connected with this hope, which forbid the idea of being ashamed of it; some of which we may be allowed to notice briefly. Was it ever known that a man was ashamed to be called the son of a wealthy and respectable father, and the heir of his estate? We presume not. But our heavenly Father owns the universe; and being his children, we are his heirs, and all that he has belongs to us. All was made for our accommodation, and we inherit it by birth-right and promise, being "heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ." We may for a time be required to wait for a part of our patrimony, but the inheritance is finally sure to the faithful; "For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's: and Christ is God's."

Was it ever known that any individual was ashamed of having honorable relatives, whether made so by wealth, learning, intelligence, virtue, office, or otherwise? Cer-

tainly not. Well, we who have the hope above described, belong to the family of God and the household of faith; prophets and apostles, saints and martyrs, are our kindred; we humbly trust that God is our Father, and Christ our elder brother; that heaven will be our permanent home, angels our intimate friends, and redeemed spirits our brothers and sisters, with whom we expect to dwell for ever in worlds of light and glory; and sing, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

Was any man of the world ever ashamed of living in a fine house? We judge not. Some of us who profess this hope live in rather poor houses now, and some of us, like our Master before us, have none that we can call our own; but we can afford to feel reconciled to this for a season, because we expect soon to remove from our old smoky tenement into a new and splendid habitation, which is fitted up for us in good style; "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

Death will bring great changes in the condition, both of the righteous and unrighteous. We could point you to a thoughtless sinner, residing in a splendid mansion, ornamented with costly sideboards and mirrors, where he feasts and figures among his numerous guests, while God is not in all his thoughts—till suddenly he is arrested by the awful message, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee." How fearful the transition from his festive scenes to the dark domains of endless despair! But here is a child of God, poor and afflicted, residing in a rude and time-worn hut, where he lingers out the remnant of his days in want, neglect, and sorrow; yet he is the son of a king, and an heir of heaven. In due time his heavenly

Father sends for him; and leaving his wretched habitation and all his poverty and trouble behind, attended by a convoy of shining angels, and cheered with songs of deliverance, he enters the everlasting temple of peace and blessedness above, to mingle with countless multitudes of saints and angels, where none but the pure in heart are admitted.

And do any of you imagine that we shall ever be ashamed of the hope of such honors and pleasures as these? No, never. We are not ashamed to be made the distinguished subjects of this hope, or to use the means to obtain it; when we enjoy it, we are not ashamed to profess it, and feel an earnest of its promised blessings. "Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and establish you in every good word and work."

SERMON XII.

THE THREE-FOLD STATE OF MAN.

Preached in the Ninth-street Church, Cincinnati, on the first Sabbath of November, 1839, *at the funeral of Col. Wm. M'Lean.*

Bishop Morris,—Dear Brother—For myself, and at the solicitation of the family and friends of Mr. M'Lean, I would kindly ask the publication of the Sermon preached by you at his funeral. I hope your time and labors may permit you to comply with our request.

Yours truly, E. W. Sehon.

Cincinnati, O., April 5, 1841.

Rev. E. W. Sehon,—Dear Brother—I cheerfully comply with the request of yourself, and the family and friends of Col. M'Lean, to submit for publication the Discourse delivered at his funeral. Aided by short notes which were made, though not publicly used on the occasion, I have been enabled, even at this late period, to write it out substantially as it was delivered; and the biographical sketch appended, is precisely as it was read before the congregation. Of the remarks which preceded the announcement of the text, on the subject of my

personal friendship for the deceased, and the consequent fear of embarrassment on that account, arising from sympathy, I made no notes, and cannot therefore repeat them. I, however, take great pleasure in referring to the agreeable acquaintance which I had with brother M'Lean for some years before his death. I think I knew him well, and the longer and more intimate our acquaintance became, the more he gained on my affections. To say all in a few words, I regarded him as an intelligent, amiable man, and a truly pious Christian. I had officiated at the funerals of four of his children, and had felt much sympathy on those occasions; but the most sorrowful duty imposed on me, was, to preach his own funeral sermon.

Yours sincerely, THO. A. MORRIS.

Cincinnati, O., April 8, 1841.

"If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come," Job xiv, 14.

MAN is distinguished from all other living creatures by his bodily form. Walking erect with firm step, lofty bearing, and his countenance glowing with intelligence, he appears, even now in his fallen state, to afford some indication that he was originally created in the image of God; and so admirably is his form adapted to all the ends of practical life, that the very structure of his body authorizes us to infer, he was made for some noble purpose. He is, however, still more prominently distinguished from all the tribes of living creatures around him, by the faculties of his mind. Endued with perception, memory, reason, judgment, conscience and volition, so wonderful are the operations of the human mind as to "scrutinize an atom and grasp a universe;" and by persevering investigation, aided by history, observation and prophecy, to form some general idea of the past, present and future, thus drawing around him almost boundless resources of entertainment, instruction and pleasure from the works of God. Another distinguishing characteristic of man, is his faculty of exact communication to his fellow-man. So perfect is the art of conversation, that thought answers to thought, while word responds to

word; and two individuals adhering to the principle of truth, can put each other in possession of all that is passing in their minds and feelings. Hence, the great pleasure which results from well ordered, social life, especially where kindred or congenial spirits meet. After this rapid view of the noble endowments of man, we may the better appreciate the words of David: "I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made."

In the midst of these pleasant reflections, how affecting is the thought, man dies. Job was so moved by this solemn consideration as to exclaim, "O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me." The purport of Job's prayer was, that the Lord would conceal his body in the grave, that his spirit might be hid with Christ in God, that the Lord would appoint a set time for his resurrection, and remember him in that day, and keep him till the divine wrath was past, or till the dominion of the grave should be broken. The question proposed in the text, "If a man die, shall he live again?" does not express any doubt of the resurrection, but implies strong confidence in the whole doctrine of a future state, as is evident from the answer which the author returns to his own inquiry, "All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come"—from life to the grave, and from thence to life everlasting. So assured was Job of his own resurrection, that he immediately added, "Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee:" thou shalt at the last day speak with the voice that wakes the dead, and I awaking from the long slumber of the tomb will respond, Here am I, Lord.

While dwelling a few minutes on this deeply interesting subject, we propose,

I. To speak of man in regard to his origin.

Man, in his fallen and bewildered state, is prone to think

of himself more highly than he ought to think; and if left to his own darkness and imbecility, might easily fall into the mistaken notion, that his species had existed always, that his going forth had been of old from everlasting; for what error are we secure against, when blind reason is left to grope her way, unaided by revelation. But the history of man's creation, short and simple as it is, prevents all fatal mistake on the subject. The material point in that history is this: "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." Connected with this important fact, is an account of the creation of woman, and the instruction which the Lord gave to Adam and Eve for the propagation of posterity, which need not be now repeated. It is proper to add here, that no satisfactory account of our origin has ever been given, except the above; and no wise man will throw that away, until he obtains a better.

A little reflection on the Bible history of man's origin would be an excellent corrective of our pride. The sum of every man's biography is this: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." What then have we to be proud of? Extended tracts of land? All we shall presently need is what will be sufficient to conceal our lothsome remains from public view. Are we proud of fine houses and furniture? We shall soon be in the charnel house, stripped of all but shroud and coffin. Are we proud of our person and features? They will soon be putrid and marred by the filthiest reptiles of earth. Are we proud of our fine apparel? Alas, it is borrowed from the stock, silk-worm, or sheep. Are we proud of our offices and titles? What will they avail us when we are laid down in the grave on a level with beggars, and our souls are called to give an

account of the deeds done in the body. Such thoughts of the folly of men are sufficient to call forth the exclamation of the prophet, "O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end."

The means originally instituted to perpetuate the life of man on earth, were all forfeited by transgression, leaving him subject to death as a just penalty for his rebellion, with the privilege in the meantime of procuring a temporary subsistence by tilling the ground from whence he was taken. All this is set forth in the history of the fall. "And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man: and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." From this language it may be inferred, that the properties of the tree of life were such as could have perpetuated the life of man, even as a fallen creature; but as it would be a curse rather than a blessing to live for ever in a sinful world with all its woes, God wisely and mercifully cut off man's access to that tree, and required him, in view of ample Gospel provision, to prepare for death and a better world. We now come to speak,

II. Of man under the dominion of death.

The cause of death is sin; for death was not natural to man in his original state of purity and innocence, but was inflicted by reason of transgression, and is therefore judicial. Of this fatal consequence of man's rebellion, the Lord gave him faithful and timely warning. "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day

that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." He did die on that day spiritually; he forfeited his union with God, and lost his favor and image, and became subject to temporal death, with all his fallen posterity. Hence, Paul said to the Romans, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned," &c. It is clear from these authorities that death is judicial; that it is the penalty of sin, and will be inflicted on all, because all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

Death is spoken of and presented under a variety of figures, and is thereby rendered the more impressive. Life being compared to a journey, death is called the end, and sometimes the "latter end." It is also called sleep, because it shuts us out from the light and visible objects of time and sense; and sometimes a "dead sleep," because it is a state from which we cannot be roused, except by the power of God. Death is sometimes compared to a cruel monarch, waging a war of extermination on all the human race; and is styled "the King of terrors," because to most people it is an object of fear. We also read of a frightful spectre riding on a pale horse, whose name is Death. But after all, death is only the absence of life, as darkness is the absence of light. It has no real form, no positive existence; and the change called death, is perfectly harmless in reference to those who are in a state of preparation to commence a future existence.

Death is best understood, by considering its effects upon us and our pursuits and circumstances. It dissolves all our temporal connections with men and things; causes the wife to be free from the law of her husband, and the servant from his master; vacates the offices we fill, and the houses we occupy, and severs entirely our connection with the world. Death also terminates all our active pursuits: stops the plough of the husbandman, silences the clatter of the

mechanic's shop, winds up the busy scenes of the mercantile house, arrests the traveler on his journey, stays the tumult of the election, checks the exciting procedure of the court, seals the tongue of the orator in profound silence, and paralizes the arm of the warrior for ever; and what is still more important, death puts a full period to our probationary state, if indeed it does not in some cases terminate sooner. The light of conviction is shed upon every man that comes into the world—the grace of repentance is freely offered to all; and in view of this, God "commandeth all men everywhere to repent." What we do must be done quickly. Now we live in the land of hope, and a day of merciful visitation is afforded us, but it will not last always; by grieving the Holy Spirit, we may induce him to depart and return no more, which would leave us helpless and hopeless; but placing the matter on the most favorable ground, our probation, at farthest, will end with life. The living would do well to heed the admonition of the wise man: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest."

Death not only terminates this state of being, with all its cares and privileges, pursuits and prospects, but introduces us at once into another state, with all its untried realities, where we shall commence an eternity of bliss or woe. It is this consideration alone which attaches to death most of all the importance which can be justly claimed for it. In the mere circumstance of dissolution, there is little to hope or fear; but the results which follow, are of infinite importance to us individually. If the consequences of death ended with the sufferings which produce it, it would be no more than we have substantially suffered already; for there is a point beyond which human nature cannot suffer. When we reach that point, conscious suffering ceases; so that all who have

suffered from any cause, till they were no longer sensible of their misery, have felt, substantially, all they will feel when soul and body are parting. Again, if death only separated us from all earthly friends, and dissolved the social ties of life, it would be quite analogous to the commencement of a long journey or sea voyage, when we part with our friends, doubting whether we shall ever see them again. Or if death merely terminated the business and cares of life, it would be very much like finishing a day's work or a day's journey; and, finally, if death only introduced us to the silence of the grave, and shut us out from the view of all terrestrial things, it would then very much resemble going to sleep on a cold winter's night. But it is certain, that the prospect of immediate death produces a sensation altogether different from any thing which belongs to these transitions; because it is a change by which we not only cease to exist here, but by which we are ushered into the light of eternity and the presence of God, the righteous judge of quick and dead. We have heard of a military character, who had braved the terror of many battles without flinching, but who subsequently, in view of approaching death, with time for reflection, betrayed some misgiving. When his friend asked him the question, "Are you afraid to die, Col. ———?" "No," said he, "but I am afraid to go to judgment."

III. We shall now speak of man in reference to his future prospects.

Here it may be proper just to remark, that all beyond the present life is enveloped in darkness, and covered with doubt and uncertainty, except when received through the medium of divine revelation. It is only when we take the Bible for our directory, and the Lord Jesus Christ for our Redeemer, that we can enjoy a well founded hope of a blissful immortality; but with the Bible in our hand, and Christ formed in our heart the hope of glory, we view by

faith "the kingdom which God hath promised to them that love him." What a blessed truth is contained in the words of Paul to Timothy, "Our Savior Jesus Christ, hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel."

Keeping this system in view, man has a certain prospect that his spirit will survive the dissolution of his body; for when the silver cord of life shall be loosed, says Solomon, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." What reception the disembodied spirit shall meet with from Him who gave it, will depend on the preparation sought and obtained in this life. If cleansed through faith in the blood of the Lamb, it will be welcomed to "the abode of angels and God;" but if not, she only

> "Ascends to God, not there to dwell;
> But hears her doom, and sinks to hell."

Another thing which man has in prospect, is a partial reward in the intermediate state between death and the final judgment. There is a clear distinction made in the sacred Scriptures between the intermediate and final state after the general resurrection. The penitent thief, on the cross, said unto Jesus, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily, I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." The Savior undoubtedly fulfilled this promise, and received the redeemed spirit of the penitent into paradise, the place of happy separate spirits; yet, when Mary first saw him on the day of his resurrection, he said unto her, "Touch me not: for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God." Here is conclusive evidence, that though Christ had been in the place of separate spirits, or paradise, between his death and resurrection, and had met the

penitent there according to promise, yet he had not ascended to God, to the kingdom of ultimate glory whence he came, whither he was bound with his risen, glorified body, and where all the saints will be collected after the general resurrection.

In the intermediate state, the righteous enjoy conscious happiness, and the unrighteous suffer conscious misery. Of this truth, we have striking examples in the cases of the rich man and Lazarus. "The beggar died, and was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom," or paradise: "the rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torment." Here he begged for water to cool his tongue, saying, "For I am tormented in this flame." Abraham replied, "Son, remember that thou in thy life time receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented." Such is the account given by the Son of God of two disembodied spirits, one was comforted, and the other tormented; and in them we have a clear illustration of the respective conditions of all separate spirits, according to their character, both righteous and unrighteous: still they had not their full reward. Lazarus was comforted in Abraham's bosom, but he will be more comforted when he shall be glorified, soul and body, in "the kingdom which God hath promised to them that love him;" and the rich man was tormented in flame, but he will be still more tormented, when he shall be cast, soul and body, into "the lake that burns with fire and brimstone."

Before we pass to the next point, we shall endeavor to illustrate this doctrine by a familiar comparison, and confirm it by Scripture authority. Suppose a man to commit murder, be tried, convicted, sentenced to death, and confined in prison, waiting the day of his execution; his conscience condemns him, and he has a fearful sense of the violent death which awaits him; but he does not yet suffer

the full penalty of the law. In this supposed case, we have some idea of the real case of the sinner who dies in sin, reads his crimes in the light of eternity, receives the sentence of death in himself; and while his body is in the grave and his spirit in the prison of hell—while his heart condemns him and he knows that God is greater than his heart, and will condemn him at the last day, he has an awful sense of his final destiny; but he will not suffer the full penalty of the divine law until after judgment, when his soul and body, reunited, will be "cast into the lake of fire and brimstone." This view of the subject is abundantly sustained by the 20th chapter of Revelation, where it is said, "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death." Now, when death or the grave which contains the bodies, and hell which contains the souls of the wicked, shall both be cast into the lake of fire, called in the same chapter the lake of fire and brimstone, with all their guilty inhabitants, then, but not till then, will the sinner suffer the full weight of divine wrath due for his transgressions.

The distinction made by the sacred writers between paradise and the kingdom of heaven, in reference to the righteous, is similar to that between hell and the lake of fire, in reference to the wicked. Suppose a man wills his son a large estate, but being a minor, he can for the present only enjoy so much thereof as will board, clothe and educate him; and though he knows a fortune awaits him, he cannot receive the inheritance in full till he is of lawful age. In like manner, the disembodied spirit of the good man in paradise enjoys his reward in part. He is as happy as he can be in the absence of his body, and he knows that the kingdom of glory will be his after the resur-

rection, but he cannot enter on the full possession and enjoyment of it till the general judgment. "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world," which is conclusive evidence they do not inherit that kingdom now.

The next thing in course, which man has in prospect, is the resurrection of the body. The doctrine of the resurrection is purely a Bible doctrine, and one which we never could have conceived, much less understood, without a revelation on the subject; but now since it is revealed, it appears as reasonable as any other doctrine peculiar to the Christian system. Our belief of this doctrine, however, is sustained, not by any course of abstract reasoning on natural and philosophic principles, but by divine authority. We fully believe the human body now committed to the grave will be restored to life; because the wisdom, truth, power and goodness of God are pledged for its accomplishment. "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?" Is he who formed the body out of the dust, not able to resuscitate it after it returns to dust? and has he not declared, "The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation?" Yes, verily; and Paul says, "There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust." The resurrection of Christ is practical proof of the doctrine.

This doctrine, though awful to the wicked, is exceedingly full of consolation to the people of God. It is pleasant to be assured by Him who cannot err, that these bodies, subject to cold and heat, weariness and hunger, sickness and pain, death and decay, will be restored to life everlasting, where they will be for ever free from affliction.

This pleasure receives additional strength from the consideration that the second edition is to be greatly improved; the contrast between the mortal body and the incorruptible body is striking. Paul said to the Corinthians, "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body." These graphic terms of the inspired apostle, are ample proof that the change will be glorious beyond description. The bodies of the saints, when committed to the dust, are cold and dim as death; but when raised in the likeness of the glorified humanity of Jesus, they will be full of life and splendor, and appear like millions of suns breaking on our spiritual vision at once. "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection." He shall be saved with all the power of an endless life.

In view of this subject, we may feel authorized to receive much consolation in reference to our deceased pious friends. Though dead, they live in a better world. Their life is hid with Christ in God. Their spirits reign with him in paradise, and their flesh rests in hope of a glorious resurrection; "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." We hope to see them in that day, when the Lord shall make up his jewels, and with them mingle in that innumerable company which no man can number, that come up out of great tribulation, having washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

This subject was suggested by the sickness and death of our lamented friend and brother, Col. W. M'Lean, of whose public life we would not speak only so far as is necessary to set forth his Christian character. He was a native of Mason county, Ky., but spent most of his life, which terminated at the age of forty-five years, in Ohio.

An important point in his history was his early piety. He embraced religion at the age of sixteen years, and ever after adhered strictly to his Christian profession; which, doubtless, exerted a powerful influence in preserving him from the fashionable vices of this generation. We do not claim for him entire exemption from the errors incident to mortal life; but take great pleasure in saying, he was never so much as charged with a crime or dishonorable act; and such was the urbanity of his manners, that he had as few enemies as any other man, whose life was equally public in our country. It is true, he was playful in his natural disposition; and among his particular friends, occasionally indulged in much pleasantry; but it was all of an innocent kind, and he never compromited his Christian character. Many public men, who seem to be pious at home, dispense with their religious duties and habits when they go abroad and enter on public life; but not so with brother M'Lean. Whether engaged as editor of a political journal, receiver of the public moneys, attending the courts as a practical lawyer, or attending the Congress of the United States, of which he was a member some six years, he still maintained his Christian principles and character—attending to his class-meetings and other duties as punctually at Washington, as he did at home; which was much to his credit, and that of the cause he professed to love.

Brother M'Lean was also a highly useful member of the Church. His house was at all times the home of ministers, where they were at once made welcome and comfortable; and his money was freely bestowed for charitable and religious purposes; and while he honored God in this respect, the Lord honored him. He was blest in his basket and store, had enough and to spare while he lived, and enough to leave his family in easy and comfortable circumstances. When not called off on public business, he usually filled, among his brethren, the important offices of class-

leader, steward and trustee, and always with credit to himself, and usefulness to the Church; and we hope he will have many stars in his crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus.

In 1836, he was arrested with hemorrhage from the lungs, from which time his health declined, with various changes not material to name, till deep-seated pulmonary consumption claimed him as its victim. Last winter, by the advice of his physicians and friends, he spent some time in the Island of Cuba, in hope of receiving permanent relief; where he suffered many privations and inconveniences, but without realizing any lasting benefit. Shortly after his return, it became apparent that he was no better, and probably never would be; whereupon he commenced making such disposition of his temporal business as his circumstances seemed to call for; and continued to seek with increased diligence a preparation for another world. After disposing of his mercantile interest on Pearl-street, he seemed to be nearly done with and relieved of all care about the things which perish with the using. His next struggle was to give up his beloved family. Sometimes, when seated in the family circle, silently musing, he would look round on the objects of his affection, and suddenly find relief in a flood of tears. Conversing about his family on one occasion with an intimate friend, he said, "He should leave them in good hands," and prayed most ardently that they might meet him in heaven. He added, "It was hard to leave them." Still in this he was singularly favored; "for," said he, "one-half of my dear children have gone before me, and by parting with these here, I shall immediately be introduced to those above;" and then, with strong affection, repeated the names of his six children in glory. In reference to the difficulty of giving up his family, he applied at the right source for help; and though the struggle was severe at first, it ended in complete

triumph on his part. On a certain memorable night, his companion discovered him at a late hour much engaged in prayer for his family, dedicating them severally and collectively to God; and being in an agony he prayed more earnestly, till the sweat rolled profusely off him, when the Lord heard and answered, so that ever after his mind was calm and resigned in reference to that subject. No doubt the Lord said to him, substantially, "Leave thy fatherless children with me, and let thy widow trust in me."

In reference to his own case, brother M'Lean was favored with much resignation and consolation, and finally with most glorious triumph through faith in the blood of the Lamb. From among the numerous items of information on this subject, we will name the few following as specimens of the whole. They are such as might be expected in the case of one who had so long stood up in the cause of his divine Master. From one well known in this Church, I received the following testimony: "I have been intimately acquainted with him since 1812, (nearly thirty years,) have met with him almost every year more or less in the class-room, and from that time until the last, in these meetings he was always comforted and greatly delighted, regarding them as a special privilege. All his life, considering the position in which he was placed, has, in some good degree, shed a lustre on the cause of religion. Still, as you know, none was more unassuming, or unwilling to receive the praise of men, than was brother M'Lean. He always seemed humble, and was ready to be directed in spiritual matters by the most obscure whom he thought pious. The last three years, his health had been gradually declining; he was fully convinced that his end was drawing near; and in view of his family and friends, the thought was painful; but as his affliction increased, his soul gathered strength, and he determined to set his house in order. Last June, he disposed of his worldly business, evidently expecting soon

to enter into another state of being. During his confinement for several weeks before his death, I was with him several times a day; he repeatedly told me that he anxiously waited the hour of his departure. Some two weeks before the last struggle, I called in one morning and found him very feeble. I told him the air was heavy and would make much against him, but he must not let his spirits sink. To which he very promptly replied, 'My dear sir, be assured my spirits were never better. My body is feeble, but my soul is happy, and I look beyond these scenes of affliction and sorrow.' During the late session of the conference in this city, he was visited by many of his old friends in the ministry, and among others by father Collins, who was his spiritual father, received him into the Church, and subsequently married him, and for whom he always had a great veneration and affection. On parting with brother Collins a few days before his death, he said, 'Father Collins, I am sorry to part with you, but it will not be long until we meet in heaven;' and exulted in the prospect of hailing him there. As he approached near his end, his confidence in God seemed to increase. He several times asked me, 'How long do you think I shall yet have to suffer?' and would always say, 'If it was the will of God, he should rejoice to go.' The night before his death was one of extreme suffering; still he murmured not, but maintained his confidence firm unto his latest breath. When he could no longer speak, he raised his hand in token of his future prospects. I think among the last things I heard him say, was, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.'" Such is the honorable testimony of one who knew him long and well. But we are not done.

One of our ministers, closely connected with his own family, through whom I obtained most of this sketch, and who was with him much, and with him to the end, has furnished the following particulars of his case. After

alluding to his declining health, the writer says, "He became convinced that all remedies must prove ineffectual, and that soon his days were to be numbered. Like the wise man, and in strict accordance with his previous life, and his faith in Christ, he immediately commenced his full preparation for eternity, to which his whole time seemed to be given. He suffered much, yet in all he was patient and perfectly resigned. To all who approached him, he expressed his readiness and willingness to meet death, while he ever acknowledged his strength firm in his God. In the midst of sufferings severe and extremely painful, he never murmured or complained, but was calm, and his mind perfectly staid on God. A few days before his death, the writer remarked to him, when they were alone, that he suffered much, but soon his sufferings would be over. To which he replied, calmly and submissively, '*Yes;*' and taking the writer's hand, and looking him full in the face, added, 'If it were my gracious Master's will, I should rejoice if it were *soon*.' On the evening preceding his death, the writer was sent for in haste to see him die. He soon arrived, and found his bed surrounded by his weeping family and friends. He had a paroxysm of coughing, seemed to suffocate, and was to appearance almost gone; his extremities were cold, and he was incapable of speech. From this state, however, he gradually revived, but only to endure greater sufferings for some hours longer. Prayer was offered around his bed. In answer to questions by his wife and others, he always gave indications of the presence and goodness of God. When he could speak, brother Reeves asked him, if now in such great pain, and so near the grave, Jesus was still precious? He replied quickly and strongly, 'O yes;' and immediately added, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' Life was fast ebbing away. He could no longer, without painful exertion, articulate. His wife requested him, if God was still with him to raise his

hand, which he immediately did; thus silently, but decisively proclaiming victory over death, his latest foe. Many other things occurred, only one of which I will name. For two hours before he expired, his pain seemed much abated. About ten minutes previous to his death, he asked his wife to turn him in bed. This done, he was asked if he could not now rest a little? To which he replied, 'I shall soon gain an eternal rest.' These were his last words. In a few moments, without a sigh or groan, he slept in Jesus." Though dead, his spirit lives in regions of light and glory, while his flesh rests in hope, waiting the days of his appointed time till his change come, when God will call him forth to mingle for ever with the redeemed.

Before we close, permit us to add, we have just learned that the venerable mother of the deceased, who resided in Warren county, O., departed this life on last Friday morning, at the advanced age of eighty-eight years, in full prospect of endless life. Her last words were, "Peace, peace, peace." We decline any attempt to describe the joyful meeting above of the mother and son, or the father and his six little children.

SERMON XIII.

RELIGIOUS VOWS.

"Pay thy vows unto the Most High," Psalm l, 14.

One proof of human depravity is our proneness to neglect religious duties; hence the numerous charges which the Scriptures urge against God's people for the sin of negligence. Jacob, who perhaps was as pious as any of his day, on his way to Padan-aram, after his very remarkable vision, "vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my

God: and this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee." According to his own proposition, the Lord was with him in great mercy; gave him a family, and large possessions in Padan-aram, where he sojourned for many years; then overruled the wrath of his enemies, and brought him in peace back to his own country; but instead of worshiping God, and giving him a tenth of all his treasure, he went to Shalem and erected an altar there, where he was visited with sore evils for his ingratitude to God. After this, "God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Beth-el, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother. Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you—and let us arise, and go up to Beth-el; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress." Thus passed off more than thirty years from the time that "Jacob vowed," under such solemn circumstances, before he paid his vow. But in this sin he was not alone. The Lord said to Israel, as the context reads, "Hear, O my people, and I will speak; O Israel, and I will testify against thee: I am God, even thy God. I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices or thy burnt-offerings, to have been continually before me." In these respects I have no fault to find; but while you outwardly perform these duties, there is an inward disaffection; therefore I ask not for sacrifices, but "offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the Most High." We shall endeavor to show,

I. The nature of religious vows.

II. Some cases in which we have failed to fulfill our vows.

III. How we should be affected with a sense of these failures.

IV. Conclude by enforcing the admonition, "Pay thy vows," &c.

I. A vow is a solemn promise to God, to offer him some sacrifice or render to him some service, and is substantially the same as what we more commonly call, a pious resolution. Thus David sang, "Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Zion: and unto thee shall the vow be performed."

Such vows have an important use; that is, to impress our minds with a sense of obligation. Suppose a man should purpose in himself, at one time, to make a donation for the purpose of aiding his neighbors to build a house of worship, yet without any expression of that purpose; but at another time the same claim is presented before him, when he is less under the influence of benevolence, and to excuse himself he reasons on this wise: "True, I did intend to do this work, but did I express that intention? is my name on any subscription paper? or did I give any verbal promise? No; and, therefore, I now decline." Whereas, if he had promised to do what he intended, and what he still admits to be right in itself, it would have been performed. The application is easy. The Spirit of God operates on all men, but sometimes more powerfully than at others; then the sinner desires and resolves to seek and serve the Lord; but when he is less impressed with divine influence, he begins to draw back, and say, "Though I fully intended to seek God and serve him, yet did I make any particular engagement? am I a professor? does my name stand recorded on any Church-book? or did I ever openly profess my convictions of duty? No; and, therefore, I can now abandon that intention." But if he had proceeded to carry out his intention when he deeply felt the necessity of religion, by committing himself as a seeker of it, he might ever after have felt himself under a double obligation to persevere.

We should enter upon our sacred vows with great rever-

ence; knowing that God is great and we are little, that he is in heaven and we are upon earth, our words before him should be few and well chosen. We should vow unto God with much humility, seeing we are unworthy, dependent, helpless, needing all things, and deserving nothing; and with the utmost sincerity, because God cannot be deceived, and will not be mocked, but requires "truth in the inward parts."

When made, our vows bring us under high and heavy responsibility. If when we voluntarily enter into an engagement with man, we are bound to make it good on pain of losing our reputation, how much more are we obliged by our covenant engagements with God? And if men will trifle with their more sacred obligations to the Almighty, who can safely trust them in their less important ones to man? Therefore, Solomon saith, "When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay."

II. Some instances in which we have made, but failed to pay our vows. Perhaps this charge may implicate all; for who in this assembly has not, earlier or later, solemnly promised before God to do better? And who has fully kept that promise? To be more particular, we begin with ourselves who minister in holy things. Let us, my brethren in the ministry, recollect our ordination vow, in which we promised to employ our "whole time in the work of God;" but who of us has punctually kept this promise? Alas, how many precious moments have we wasted in doing nothing, or worse than nothing? The private members of the Church may also be involved in delinquency. Have we, as members of the body of Christ, paid all our *vows?* No. Our baptismal vow was to "renounce the vain pomp and glory of the world, the devil

and all his works, the carnal desires and lusts of the flesh, so that we would not be led or governed by them;" after all which we have, in many cases, followed the lying vanities of the world, the devices of Satan, and the perverseness of our own hearts, and we cannot deny it. Consider our sacramental vows. As by baptism, we take on ourselves the profession of the name of Christ, so by the holy sacrament of the eucharist, we, from time to time, renew that profession. Indeed, every time we commune at the Lord's table, we virtually take the oath of allegiance to the Lord Jesus, to be for him, and him only; and yet how many, after this most solemn of all dedications, deny him like Peter, betray him like Judas, and "crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh." As seekers of religion, we have vowed to give up the world with its follies, sin with its false pleasures, and never cease seeking until we shall have found God merciful to us; but how often, and how shamefully, have we broken these vows? And by so doing, we have given Satan an advantage over us; consequently, he tells us, now there is no mercy for us, since we have sinned against light and knowledge. Although it is a false suggestion of Satan, that mercy is clean gone for ever, yet the broken resolution of the penitent plants a dagger of conviction in his heart, sharper and deeper than all the sins he ever committed "ignorantly in unbelief;" but after all, he need not despair of finding mercy, seeing Christ is his advocate with the Father, and ever liveth to make intercession for him.

The delinquencies of ministers, members, and seekers are great, but those of ordinary sinners are still worse. There are many to preach the experience of Christians, but who will undertake to preach the experience of sinners? By the grace of God assisting, we will try it on this occasion, though the subject is an awful one. When quite young, the sinner is consciously touched by the Spirit's influence, sees his fallen condition, discovers the beauty of

holiness, and desires to become a practical Christian. But Satan tells him he is so young, the people would think it only a childish notion; that he should wait till he is older, and has a sounder judgment in such matters. Such reasonings too often satisfy the young sinner, cause him to defer his repentance; and thus his first good impressions are like "the morning cloud and early dew that pass away." After he is grown well nigh to manhood, the Lord powerfully arrests him again. Alarmed at his condition, he acknowledges all that God requires is his reasonable service; "but," says he, "I am now just coming into notice, and beginning to figure on the stage of life; if I turn to a life of piety now, my young companions will think that I am old fashioned, singular, melancholy, or deranged; but if the Lord will bear with me until I shall have formed my connections for life, and am settled in the world, then I will certainly repent and serve him." It may be the Lord tries him again. He presently finds himself possessed of a family, and charged with an occupation, when the Spirit of God addresses him in the language of our text, "Pay thy vows unto the Most High." "Ah!" he exclaims, with emotions of terror, "the time, the full time, according to my own appointment, has come for me to repent; but I now have a family to support, my circumstances in life are low, and how can I serve God and attend to the business of the world, so as to make property, and provide for a future day? 'I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it; and I pray thee, have me excused,' until I shall have acquired enough property to make me independent, and then I will assuredly repent, and turn to the Lord with full purpose of heart." Possibly, Jehovah still bears with the guilty rebel; and as "these are the ungodly that prosper in the world" and increase in riches, he soon increases in goods and has need of nothing, when the Holy Ghost says, "Pay thy vows unto the Most High." "O,"

says he, "that I could, but now I am so overwhelmed in business, that it appears to be exceedingly difficult, if not impossible; my business used to be at home, but now it is at home and abroad; it once was private, but now it is public also; once it was small and easy, but it has multiplied, until I am wearied day and night with toil and care: 'Go thy way for this time, and when I have a convenient time I will call for thee.'" When? "After I get old, give up my business to others, and retire from the world to enjoy solitude, then I will have nothing else to do, and will attend strictly to a preparation for eternity." Well for him if he is not, before that time, beyond the reach of mercy for ever. But suppose the long suffering of God should continue till the infirmities of age drive him from business, and then give him another call, what then? Hear his piteous complaint, "O that I had a heart to repent, but I have been so long a sinner, and am so confirmed in habits of impiety, that my heart is hardened by the 'deceitfulness of sin;' once I had tender emotions, but I have broken promises, and 'lied to the Holy Ghost,' until they are all gone." "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil," especially when those habits are of long continuance. But he has one more alternative, and then he is done. When he gets sick and is about to die, he fancies that the soft emotions of his heart will revive, and he will then surrender and be accepted. Disease takes hold on him, but he is flattered by himself and others, that as he has often been sick and recovered, so it will be again. Thus, lulled by false representations from the world and the devil, he dozes on, until—awful to see—he is just on the breaking verge of time, and about to launch into eternity; and now he discovers that what requires a whole life time of preparation, must be obtained in a few moments—that is, fitness for immortality. Beside, his temporal business

must now be closed, his friends sent for and greeted. All is confusion and consternation; the pulse of life beats faint and few; his sun goes down under a dark cloud; he sinks into the sad sleep of death; his body is given to worms; his spirit takes a leap in the dark, and awakes in a region of chains and dungeons, demons and fire, far beyond the impassable gulf which separates the rich man from Abraham, Lazarus and Jesus, for ever.

These things are not imaginary. They are sober truths, dread realities, in reference to thousands in our own day and country; and if ye would not realize the experience of a sinner in all its extent, you must shun the sinner's ways, and pay your vows in season.

III. How we should be affected by a sense of these our failures. They should cause us to distrust ourselves; for though we have proceeded on the supposition, that in offering all these vows, we meant to be sincere, yet there have been numerous failures in the performance. Let this teach us to distrust ourselves, and put "no confidence in the flesh;" but trust in him, who stands between the Father's wrath and us.

In the meantime, we should repent and pray. To our other sins, we should add those of negligence and broken vows, and turning to God with the full tears of contrition, beg mercy and pardon for all. Indeed, we should be suitably alarmed. Yes, in view of the number of our sins, and all the aggravating circumstances under which they have been committed, we should even be alarmed; seeing, that if we finally reject Christ, "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries." And seeing our broken vows afford just cause of alarm, we should be induced to come to Christ; for the more danger we are in, and the more helpless we are to escape it, and the more forlorn and hopeless our case may

be, the stronger is the argument to come straight to the Lord Jesus, the friend of sinners and Savior of men; and we add, the greater our misery, the more welcome at "the throne of grace."

IV. We must conclude our remarks by enforcing the admonition, "Pay thy vows unto the Most High." These vows have been formed under different circumstances of mercy, judgment, religious excitement, or sober reflection; no matter how, the claims exist against us, and they are just. We have not said, nor meant, that our crime consisted in making vows, for this was right; but our sin is, that, having made, we fail to pay them. Will time diminish these claims? No, verily; they are recorded in heaven against us. Already, we fear, we "owe ten thousand talents, and have nothing to pay;" and delays, instead of helping us out, are getting us more deeply involved. Our Lord Jesus Christ is, however, offering daily to be our surety, and if we will receive him in our hearts by faith, he will afford us a full release—all delinquencies, as well as crimes, shall be absolved; and we made the free and accepted children of the kingdom of grace.

The final consequences of persisting in a course of impenitent delinquency, should prompt us to pay our vows; for even in the context, we learn, "Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. He shall call from the heavens above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people. * * * Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver." How terrible are the threatenings of Jehovah, but much more awful will be the execution of them; and that they may never overtake us, let us now awake to this all important subject, and pay our vows unto the Most High. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

SERMON XIV.

THE GREAT DAY OF GOD'S WRATH.

"For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" Revelation vi, 17.

WHATEVER reference this alarming passage of Scripture may have, primarily, to the judgments God sent upon the wicked Romans, we think its more important application is to the day of judgment. Read the context, and you will have our reason for this opinion. "And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood: and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bond-man, and every free-man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"

It is generally the case, that subjects of pulpit discussion are more specially applicable to one part of the congregation than another, but the general judgment is one which should be equally interesting to all people, in all ages; consequently, John speaks here of things future, as though they were present—the great day of his wrath is come. Admitting this, by supposition, and examining ourselves now, as if actually entering upon our final trial, let us ask the solemn question, Who shall be able to stand? For the better understanding of the subject, we shall speak,

I. Of the wrath of God.

II. Of the day of his wrath.

III. Attempt to answer the question, "Who shall be able to stand?"

I. The wrath of God is a subject on which men have gone to the widest extremes. Whenever we think of him as a being of passions like ourselves, we entirely mistake his character; for God is a spirit, pure and unchangeable.

From this some have gone to the opposite extreme, and concluded that it was erroneous to attribute wrath to God in any sense; and, hence, the supposition of modern sceptics or false teachers, that Jehovah is not, and never was, irreconciled to any of his creatures, however sinful. But this is contrary to the plain declarations of God's own word. "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness,' &c. "Because there is wrath, beware, lest he cut you down with a stroke." "God is angry with the wicked every day." "Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil." These examples are sufficient to show that, in some sense, God exercises wrath.

How are these, and like declarations, to be understood? We answer, though God never falls into a fit of sympathy, nor a rage of anger; yet he naturally, necessarily, eternally, and unchangeably loves holiness, and all who possess and practice it; and he is naturally, necessarily, eternally, and unchangeably opposed to sin, and to all who love and practice it: hence, he is said to love the righteous, and to be angry with the wicked.

In what way is this opposition made known or expressed? By all the judgments he sends upon the wicked here and threatens them with hereafter. But there is a time when this will be displayed in an extraordinary manner; which brings us to notice,

II. The day of his wrath, which is the judgment day.

The propriety of that day appears from various considerations. All systems of human government are insufficient to secure impartial justice to their subjects. Indeed, some do not allow that they are subjects of human government at all; such as monarchs, whose power is absolute, who do as they please, and account to no body on earth for their conduct; but reason says, there should be a tribunal at which they must answer hereafter. And among those who are subjects of human law, there is great inequality; for supposing these laws to be the best that can be made, and the ministers of them the best that can be chosen, yet such is the weakness of man, and the imperfection of his work, that in some cases the innocent will be punished, and in others the guilty will go free; and, hence, the propriety of a day of judgment, to which one general appeal can be made from all these wrong decisions.

The propriety of a judgment, may be argued also from the dispensations of Providence. One man, distinguished for wisdom, meekness and piety, suffers a train of calamities, which cause him to linger out a life of poverty, disease and sorrow. Another, distinguished only for his folly, cruelty, impiety and wickedness, rides in all the pomp of state, through a life of wealth, health, and revelry. Now, on the supposition that there is no future reckoning, how can those seemingly unequal distributions of the blessings of Providence, be reconciled to the attributes of infinite wisdom, mercy, justice, and truth? But if we draw aside the vail, which now obscures our view of eternity, and behold that procedure which rewards the virtuous, and punishes the vicious, then we can fully justify the ways of God to man.

Whatever may be thought of the propriety of a day of judgment, the certainty thereof is fixed by the Holy Scriptures, beyond doubt, with all who read and believe them: "because he hath appointed a day in the which he

will judge the world in righteousness." Again, "it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." The whole tenor of the sacred writings goes to establish the same truth. But he who will not believe these plain declarations, will not believe any Scripture testimonies; and we will spend no time with him for nought.

The grandeur of that day is learned by man from the same source. Daniel said, "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened." We read in Revelation, "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no more place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." These passages speak for themselves. Comment would spoil them.

Who is to preside as Judge on that awful occasion? The Lord Jesus Christ, who said, "For the Father judgeth no man; but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." The same truth is declared by Paul in these words: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent: because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained: whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead;" from all which the divinity of Christ is fully and fairly inferred. In the Old

Testament it is said, "God is judge himself;" but in the New Testament it is declared, Christ is judge. Put these together: God is judge, but Christ is judge, therefore Christ is God; and if he were not, how could he judge the world? Who, that is not infinite, could perceive, understand, and pass righteous judgment upon all the thoughts, words, and actions of one individual? But this, according to Solomon, the Judge will do with reference to all men. He says, "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." Who is more suitable for this work than Christ—than "God manifested in the flesh?" His appearance at the last day must strike with terror the wicked, who refuse submission to him; but will kindle heavenly raptures in the hearts of his saints, who love him in sincerity.

The place of this fearful scene is a question of more curiosity than profit; and, therefore, needs but little discussion. Some have located it on this globe. Others have supposed it might be in the "new heaven and new earth." But if any thing can be known on the subject, it must be ascertained by revelation, which rather favors the idea of its being in the firmament, or open space between the heavens and the earth; "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." Here the Lord is represented as descending, and the people ascending, till all meet in open space, where the judgment will be erected, affording an opportunity to all the inhabitants of heaven, earth and hell, to witness the award of each other, as well as to hear their own case decided.

The time is equally uncertain with us. For though "God hath appointed a day" for it, well known to himself,

yet he hath not informed us when that day will come. Perhaps one reason of this is, that it may have a salutary influence on mankind of all ages. If the time of the general judgment were announced, those who live very remote from it, would be too little, while those who live very near to the time, would be too much affected by it. But while the time is secret, there is no safe ground to occupy, but to be always ready; and hence the judgment is as well calculated to influence the one as the other. But we have no doubt of one fact; that is, come when it may, it will be as unexpected to the world, as if it were to come now; for they are to be "eating, drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage, when the Son of man shall come." And if the last day find us in all the round of worldly business, and worldly pleasures, what dismay and confusion it must spread in our guilty world. To be suddenly startled from our slumbers by the alarm of fire in our dwelling is fearful; what then will be the consternation of the wicked, and the carnally secure, when the fierce lightnings of divine wrath shall set our world on fire? Where then will they flee for refuge? Ah! to the judgment, to the judgment, we must go.

Who shall be there? "The dead, small and great;" the husbandman from his field; the tradesman from his shop; the poor from the cottage; the beggar from the street; the prisoner from his cell; the learned from the study; the rich from their pleasures; the statesman from his mansion; the king from his throne; the lewd from their revels; the saints from their prayers; the minister from the pulpit; the congregation from the church; the votaries of pleasure from the theatre; the living from their employments; the dead from their graves; all that have been, now are, or shall hereafter be in our world; holy angels from heaven, and fallen angels from hell. In this innumerable crowd, let us recollect, each of us shall make one.

As to the manner of the proceedings of that day, who can tell? It beggars all description. Thoughts of it make my whole frame now shiver; and what are these compared to the sight thereof? But the more we think of it, the better we shall be prepared for the scene; and why should we shrink at the discussion, when we know we cannot shun the scrutiny itself? When the great purposes of God are served with man on earth, this his polluted habitation will be destroyed. The angel of the Revelation, will take his stand, one foot on the sea and the other on the land, and lifting his hand towards heaven, shall swear by him that liveth for ever and ever, that time shall be no longer. In that moment, the wheels of time shall suddenly stand still; the heavenly bodies cease to revolve; seed time and harvest, day and night, will be over. Gabriel, swifter than the flight of thought, flies across the concave of heaven, proclaiming with a voice which appalls creation, "Arise ye dead, and come to judgment." This sound reaches the bottom of the grave, the mossy tomb-stones are dislodged, and the dead start into life: it descends to the mighty deep, and she rolls her millions forth: it breaks through the earth and down to hell, and Satan, terror-struck with the thunders of Jehovah's wrath, repairs with his swarming legions from his fiery cell to the more fearful judgment seat. The resurrection of the saints will be like ten thousand suns breaking at once upon our benighted world, but that of the wicked like waking amidst destructive flames. How changed the world, since they left it! Its grandeur is gone, cities burnt already, the mountains are falling, the seas boiling, sinners exclaiming with horror, devils howling with vexation of spirit, saints shouting their final triumph. And now the conflagration increases, it consumes the solid ground, dries up the briny deep, communicates to the curtains of the temporal heavens, and flashes from comet to comet. In the midst of all, see! see! the great white

throne descending. Ah! my hearers, it is no chimera now. Yonder comes the Judge! his face like the sun, his eyes like streams of lightning, his voice as the sound of many waters—astonished worlds retire from his presence! but angels, men, and devils form one vast concourse around him!

What is the object of all this? The Judge is about to assert the honor of his throne, by judging all his creatures—according to their works—in a way too, that will let all see and hear the justice of the decision. Now "the books are opened," all the sources of testimony brought to light, which produce a revelation of characters; the self-righteous moralist, who prided himself on his correct deportment, while he rejected Christ and his grace, will there see the depths of his pollution; but the humble, self-denying, cross-bearing Christian, who was persecuted and reviled, will appear with all the purity of his motives and loveliness of his character. Also a revelation of consciences. Things which we here viewed as innocent recreations, or perhaps as virtues, will there, when viewed in the light of eternity, assume the nature of crimes; and things which we esteemed little sins, and therefore soon forgot them, will be revived before our guilty minds, and haunt us like ghosts of the infernal regions.

There will be too a revelation of secrets. How many "hidden things of dishonesty" will there come out. Here, if guilty of secret crimes, we try to hush our conscience by the argument that they are not known; or if known by a few, they are friends and will not expose us; or if they do, we can contradict the report, and prevent the general belief thereof; or if we fail in this, we can offer such palliations as will greatly soften matters with the people; but there all such excuses will be vain—the whole of our sins must come out as they are, with all their aggravating circumstances, and we be treated accordingly.

How great will be the day of his wrath, when all these calamities shall come on the world of man. There have been many days of his wrath—as when he deluged the old world, rained fire and brimstone on Sodom and Gomorrah, sent the Roman eagles on the wicked Jews; or when he hath visited more modern nations with war and pestilence, plague and famine; but what are all these, compared to the great day of his wrath, when "he shall arise terribly to shake the earth" with his fury, and "fling his wrath abroad?" We proceed to notice,

III. The inquiry, Who shall be able to stand? All who live and die in favor with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, and none else, whatever natural pre-eminence they may have over others; for "there is none other name given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved." And to be saved by him, implies redemption from the curse of the violated law, repentance, faith, pardon, holiness, and perseverance. Christ is to judge all men according to his Gospel; which teaches that infants are justified wholly by the atonement, without any conditions; that heathens are accepted if they live up to the rule of conscience, partially enlightened by the Holy Spirit; and that we who have the Gospel, are accepted only by repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, each one being responsible according to his privileges and abilities: "For as many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law, (for not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law, are a law unto themselves. Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing, or else excu-

sing one another;) in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my Gospel."

According to this view of the subject, all who die in infancy will be able to stand complete in Christ, being redeemed from original sin, and sanctified for himself. Pious heathens shall be able to stand, while baptized heathens in our own land will fall to rise no more—the humble and self-denying shall be able to stand, while the proud are cut down with the sword of justice—the orderly and sincere worshipers of God shall be able to stand, while the persecutors and disturbers of his worshipers will be destroyed—the faithful preacher, who regards the truth and the honor of Christ more than his own ease or applause, shall be able to stand, while designing heretics, and they who seek only their own honor, will descend into the lake of fire—pious children will be able to stand, while wicked and opposing parents will be eternally undone—even pious servants will be able to stand, while impious and cruel masters will be sentenced to an awful hell. In a word, the truly pious of all ages, and all names, shall be able to stand, and stand for ever, while "the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the families that forget God." May God prepare us for death, judgment, and a glorious immortality, and finally save us all for his Son's sake. Amen.

SERMON XV.

THE WORSHIP OF CHRIST.

"If any man serve me, him will my Father honor," John xii, 26.

"WHAT think ye of Christ?" is a question to which answers have been accumulating for ages past; and if we had before us all the theories which those answers furnish, they would form a huge mass of confusion, error, and contradiction. But not to trouble ourselves with the various

mistakes of men on this subject, it will be sufficient for our present purpose, to give the answer furnished by the Holy Scriptures. He is "Emmanuel; which being interpreted, is God with us:" "God manifested in the flesh:" "And in him dwelt the fullness of the Godhead bodily," or the whole divine nature.

This view of the subject is not only important, but essential to our salvation individually; for if Christ be any less than the unoriginated and self-existent God, he is necessarily limited in his perfections; and, therefore, while we pray to, and trust in him, he may not know that any such individuals as ourselves are in existence; and if he does know us, being thus limited, he lacks the power necessary to afford us suitable relief. This view is also essential to the whole system of revealed religion; for it claims supreme divinity for him; and he professed to be God, one with the Father; of course if he is not God, the whole Christian revelation is a vain pretense, a "cunningly devised fable." It is with this understanding of the subject, that we now introduce it to our hearers; and propose to notice, briefly,

I. The character who, in the text, claims our service.

II. What is implied in serving him.

III. The promise made to those who thus serve him.

I. What is clearly stated in many other places, is here fairly implied in the words, "My Father," that Christ is the Son of God. But in what sense?

1. Respecting his humanity; for "he took on himself not the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham;" that is, our nature, with all its innocent infirmities, and every thing pertaining to it, sin only excepted, comprehending a body, which is known from his being born, being hungry, weary, increasing in stature, suffering, dying, &c. And a soul, though modern Arians inform us that Christ possessed no rational soul, by which, if they mean any thing, they must

mean either that the soul of Christ was irrational, or that he had no soul; the latter being the more charitable conclusion, we will fix on it as the correct one. But how does this agree with the Scriptures, "Thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin;" "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death?" Judge ye. But though they say he had no rational soul, he was a pre-existent, super-angelic spirit, created at some period before the temporal universe, and who in the fullness of time assumed a human body, and animated it as our souls animate our bodies. To all this it is enough to say, that if this account of Christ be true, then he belongs to the classification of neither God, angels, nor men, and is a being unheard of before, unknowing and unknown, till the Unitarian revelation brought him to light; but how many of these sentiments can be found in the Bible? Not one. Christ then is the Son of God respecting his humanity, as described by the angel to Mary, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God."

2. We think the divine as well as human nature of Christ, is called Son in divers places by the sacred writers; and among others in the following: "For the Father judgeth no man; but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: that all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son, honoreth not the Father which hath sent him," John v, 22, 23. "But unto the Son, he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom," Hebrews i, 8. It will here be observed, that the being called "the Son," is to judge the world, and is to be honored even as the Father; that he is called God, and that his throne, as such, is for ever and ever. Now to apply all this to the humanity of Christ would be absurd.

Yet we are not careful to contend about words or phrases. Grant us the position that Christ is God in the proper sense of the term, and we are content. If the divine as well as human nature of Christ be called the Son of God, as we understand it, he is so called, not to indicate that the Father is older and the Son younger, but Father and Son are used as terms of distinction, to convey the idea of plurality of persons in the Godhead, or divine nature. And this doctrine of plurality of persons in the one true God, is as old among men as the Bible; for in the first chapter of Genesis, where the name of the Supreme Being is recorded for the first time on earth, we find a plain proof in these expressions: "Let us make man in our image;" and at the building of the tower, "Let us go down and confound their language." Not delaying now to trace the evidences through all the prophetic ages, we observe in the history of the baptism of Christ, the Son, the subject of the baptism, the Father whose voice proceeded from heaven, and the Holy Spirit descending upon the Son. Here the idea of a Trinity is clearly indicated. The same is stated more definitely in 1 John v, 7, "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one:" one inseparable, and indivisible. As Christ said, "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father." "I and my Father are one." Now, if Unitarians undertake to prove, in opposition to such plain declarations, that the Father and Son are not one, but two distinct beings, do they not virtually say, that our Savior was mistaken? But again, said Christ, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Why not in the name of the Father, Moses, and Paul? Because, to administer a religious ordinance in the name of a mere creature would be idolatry; and what better is it, done in the name of the Son, and the Holy Ghost, if they

be not God? Let us reduce it to a formal argument. The Father is God, but the Father and Son are one; therefore the Father and Son are God. Again, the Father and Son are God, but the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are one; therefore, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are God.

Christ bears the titles of the Supreme Being. Thus, Isaiah said, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of peace." And again, "As for our Redeemer, the Lord of hosts is his name." Jude said, "To the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever." Christ said, in the 1st chapter of Revelation, "I am * * * the Almighty." In these, and numerous other places, Christ bears the titles of the Supreme Being—mighty God, only wise God, Lord of hosts, everlasting Father, Almighty; from which it follows, conclusively, either that they show him to be the supreme God, or they do not teach that the Father is the supreme God; for to both they are equally applied.

He possesses the attributes of God—as Eternity: "whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting;" which means from eternity. Omniscience; for Peter said to him, "Lord, thou knowest all things;" and the disciples, "Now are we sure that thou knowest all things." Omnipresence; "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Omnipotence; having "all power in heaven and in earth." The same might be said of his moral attributes, as love, justice, mercy, truth, holiness; but these sublime topics we have no time at present to discuss.

He performs the works of God—as (1) creation. In the Old Testament it is said, "In six days God made the heavens and the earth;" but in the New Testament it is

said (Hebrews i, 10) by the Father to the Son, "And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands." Again, John i, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. * * * All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made." Once more, (Colossians i, 16, 17,) "For by him (Christ) were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist." Here are four Scriptural affirmations of the supreme divinity of Christ: 1. He is the Creator of all things. 2. He created them for himself, and not for another. He who acts only as a delegate, acts not for himself, but for the power that delegated him; but here we find all things were made by Christ, and for him—that is, for his own glory. 3. "He is before all things;" and, consequently, is not a thing, but is self-existent. 4. "By him all things consist," or are "upheld by the word of his power;" "the government" of the universe "is upon his shoulder." Now put the proofs of the Old and New Testaments together. God made the heavens and the earth, but Jesus Christ made the heavens and the earth; therefore, Jesus Christ is God. (2.) The pardon of sin: "Who can forgive sin but God." Nevertheless, "that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sin, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,) rise, take up thy bed and walk." (3.) Judgment: "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." Again, in the 50th Psalm, "God is judge himself;" but the New Testament informs us that Christ is judge; therefore, Christ is God.

3. His mediatorial character, comprising both his human and divine natures. After asserting, and we trust proving, from the Scriptures, both the proper humanity and real divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, let us, for a moment, observe him in the union of these two; for though the divine nature is not absorbed by the human, nor the human changed into the divine, yet are they permanently united in the person of the Son of God: and, hence, while some Scriptures speak of him only as a man, and others only as God, there is still another class of Scriptures which speak of him in reference to both, and which can be explained on no other principle; as John iii, 13, "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man, which is in heaven." Here Christ speaks to Nicodemus in the present tense; and though his bodily presence was on earth, yet he calls himself the Son of man which is in heaven; for, as God, he fills immensity. Another example is Revelation xxii, 16, "I am the root and the offspring of David." When Christ here calls himself "the root of David," he means that he is the source or cause of David's existence; or, if you please, David's Creator; but when he calls himself "the offspring of David," he means that he is David's son. Now, how could he be both David's Creator and David's son on any other principle than that of being both God and man? This view of the subject, therefore, is essential to the proper understanding of the Scriptures, as well as to the office of mediation; and it is in this character that Christ is the most suitable object of our faith. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

II. What is implied in serving him.

1. Though there is a difference in the literal meaning of the terms *serve* and *worship*, yet the appropriated sense

of them, by the sacred writers, is often the same; hence, to serve God, and to worship him, are substantially the same thing: both of which terms are frequently used in the Scriptures, as expressive of our duty to Christ. The word worship is sometimes applied to men, but then it is to be understood not in the real, but figurative sense, to mean respect, reverence; for respect is due from a man to a stranger, reverence from a son to a father; but much more than either, is due from the creature to the Creator. Unitarians say we may worship the Father as supreme, and the Son as inferior. This, we think, to be a long stride into the regions of idolatry; for if we may worship the Father as a great God, and the Son as a little God, we may, for the same reasons, worship the Holy Ghost as no God; and, finally, we may be induced to worship Mary with the Papists, and Juggernaut with the Hindoos. But, to examine the subject by the rules of Scripture, Christ either is, or is not God in the proper sense of that term. If he is God, then we are not at liberty to worship him as inferior; and if he is not God, then to worship him at all is a plain violation of the first commandment, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." Now, here we are positively commanded to serve God only, yet in our text we are required to serve Christ. Query. Does Christ here require us to break the commandment, and commit the sin of idolatry, that we may have a part "in the lake of fire and brimstone?" Or does he require it, because he is God, and entitled to our service? We choose to believe the latter. Again, where is it written in the sacred Oracles, that we are to make such a difference in the worship of the Father and the Son? Surely not in John v, 22, 23, "For the Father judgeth no man; but hath committed all judgment to the Son." For what purpose? "That all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son, honoreth not

the Father which hath sent him." In this text, we are plainly taught two things: (1.) That all men are bound to pay equal divine honors to the Father and to the Son. (2.) That he who refuses thus to honor the Son, dishonors the Father; and of consequence hath no part in him.

2. We have precepts to worship the Son of God. Hebrews i, 6, "When he (the Father) bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him." And Philippians 2, where it is said of Christ, "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation. * * * Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him: * * * that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." So that, however some may now refuse submission to the Son of God, the time will come when angels, men and devils, shall acknowledge the justice of his claim, and bow to "the thunder of his power;" some of choice, and others of necessity.

3. We have examples for worshiping the Son of God. The Magi, or wise men from the east, came to the infant Redeemer, prostrated themselves, and presented to him gold, as a king, frankincense, as a God, and myrrh, as a man; the Syrophonecian woman worshiped him; the disciples, from time to time, held him by the feet and worshiped him; the malefactor prayed to him on the cross; dying Stephen said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit;" and many others. In connection with these examples, let it be observed, that one of the principal charges which the Jews had against him was, that "he, being a man, made himself equal with God," receiving the adorations of the people; and if this charge was not well founded, that he claimed equality with God, why did he

not contradict it? Was he not as good as Paul and Barnabas, who, when the people proposed to offer sacrifices to them, forbade them? Or the angel, who, when John would have worshiped him, said, "See thou do it not—worship God?" And why did not our Savior forbid those who worshiped him? We must suppose either that he was a divine person, and justly entitled to acts of religious worship, or that he was less virtuous than angels and men who refused such adoration. We choose to adopt the former supposition.

III. The promise to such as thus serve him: "him will my Father honor."

1. To whom is this promise made? Surely not to those who withhold from the Son of God the honors which he justly claims of them—who would rob him of his crown, and turn the Creator into a creature; for "whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father." And again, "He that honoreth not the Son, honoreth not the Father which sent him." Wherefore, though we would not deal in epithets which are abusive or unkind, we are not authorized to apply this promise to any whose creed does not recognize the supreme divinity of the Lord Jesus, whether they call him impostor, a mere man, a great martyr, or a pre-existent, super-angelic spirit. But,

2. To all such as "love him in sincerity," worship him in spirit and in truth, and render a holy obedience to all his righteous commands, take up their cross daily and follow him, yea, that follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. All such shall be honored with "the Spirit of adoption," and the testimony of a good conscience; with the full and free pardon of all their sins, a name and a place in the Church of Christ below, victory over their spiritual enemies, triumph in death, a place in paradise, a glorious resurrection, an honorable acquittal at the general judgment; and, finally, a place amidst "the general assembly and

Church of the first-born, which are written in heaven," for ever.

To conclude our remarks, already, we fear, too numerous:

1. Who is able to fathom the depths, and comprehend the mysteries of this theme—the incarnation of the Son of God? Here we are called to contemplate a Being bearing the titles, possessing the attributes, and doing the works of Jehovah, yet clothed with our own frail nature, and engaged in this world on a mission of mercy and love to our fallen race; traveling, teaching, suffering, bleeding, dying, conquering, rising, triumphing, and receiving the adorations of millions, by him rescued from endless ruin! It makes us wonder, adore, and

> "Breathe unutterable praise,
> In rapturous awe, and silent love."

Well, if we cannot comprehend the mystery, we can believe the fact, that "God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, and received up into glory;" and believing, though we see him not, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

2. Who can resist this almighty Redeemer, the Judge of quick and dead? Ye have heard of the rewards he has for the humble and obedient who serve him; but the counter part of the subject is truly awful. Now, indeed, we can pull away the shoulder, and turn away the ear, and refuse to have the man Christ Jesus to reign over us; but "who can stand before him when he appeareth" to judge our guilty race? when he shall "come in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, and all the nations of the earth shall be gathered before him," to hear their final doom? When he shall "arise terribly to shake the earth," and "fling his wrath abroad," then shall the finally impenitent know, that "it is an awful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

3. Lastly; but now he offers peace, holding out the golden sceptre of mercy, that we may touch and live; and if we will submit to his authority, his power is present to heal; his grace will always be sufficient; his yoke easy, and his burden light. He will cheer us in death, and exalt us to crowns and kingdoms immortal. "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen."

SERMON XVI.

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

"I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore. Amen," Revelation i, 18.

This account of our Lord Jesus Christ is given by himself, who is the purest, the most interesting and extraordinary character that ever appeared in our world—in comparison of whom the age of Methuselah, the meekness of Moses, strength of Sampson, patience of Job, wisdom of Solomon, love of John, and eloquence of Apollos, all dwindle into insignificance. The narrative of his life is a history of wonders. He was conceived by the overshadowing of the power of the Highest; his birth was announced by a mission of angels; the star of heaven directed the wise men of the east to Bethlehem, an obscure village, to worship in a manger the infant Redeemer of the world; by his juvenile intelligence, he confounded the elders and doctors of the law; by a series of miracles the most merciful, and yet the most magnificent, he reversed and restored at will the laws of nature; and by his sufferings in the closing scene of his earthly pilgrimage, to which he voluntarily surrendered himself, he shook the globe, and darkened the world. To crown the whole, it appeared suitable, that he should demonstrate the divinity of his character and mission, by rising from the dead. The

resurrection of Christ is a matter of fact in his history, with which the whole system of Christianity must stand or fall; and, which, considering its importance, is too much neglected by the heralds of the cross; but which, we are happy to believe, and, therefore, cheerfully state, admits of proofs the most certain, and arguments the most incontrovertible; consequently, all the indulgence we ask is an impartial hearing, while we call up some of the main features of the subject.

A resurrection is a restoration from a state of death to a state of life—a return from the grave of the same body that went into it; hence, to be certain of Christ's resurrection, we must first be certain of his death. And did he die? Ask the Jews that prosecuted him, the governor who passed sentence upon him, and the soldiers that executed him, the crowd of spectators who witnessed his dying agony, heard him say, "It is finished," and saw his head recline upon his shoulder! Ask all nature, the rending vail, the darkened sun, the shivering rocks, the opening tombs, the rising saints, and the trembling earth! Ask the soldiers that were sent to hasten the death of the sufferers, and broke the bones of the first and of the second that were crucified with him, but when they came to Jesus broke not his bones, because he was dead already; "but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water," for the washing of the nations, clearly indicating that life was extinct! Ask Joseph who begged the body for interment, wrapped it in clean linen and laid it in his own new tomb! Ask the mournful procession of weeping disciples that followed and saw him laid in the sepulchre! They all proclaim him dead, and no one doubts the fact.

We notice next the means used to prevent his resurrection. Immediately after the interment, a delegation of Christ's enemies waited on the governor, "Saying, Sir,

we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first. Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can." Whereupon, a military detachment from among the regular troops stationed at Jerusalem, under the newly founded empire of Rome, was ordered to the sepulchre, whose employers showed them the deposit which they were called out to defend; rolled a huge stone, used as a lid or shutter, to the mouth of the sepulchre; affixed the governor's seal, to show that all was done by public authority; gave the necessary orders, and retired. Let it be here remarked, that all these precautions to prevent the resurrection of Christ, are only additional evidences that the fact really transpired, rendering it more obvious than it otherwise could have been. What a solemn crisis was this in the history of the Christian Church. The Shepherd of Israel was smitten, and all his flock scattered; the enemies of the cross seemed to have a momentary triumph; Zion was prostrated, and bleeding at a thousand veins; the Savior was about to demonstrate that he was the Son of God, or be detected as an impostor; the truth or falsity of revealed religion was then to be fully and fairly tested. All was anxiety on either side. The wheels of time seemed to linger, but the hardy soldiers were firm at their posts, by night and day. The approach of day on the third morn was announced by the faint glimmer which the morning star shed upon the soldier's spear. The interest of the occasion was increasing. Presently, the eastern horizon was slightly streaked with the dawn of day. The soldiers took courage, and perhaps said, "The victory is ours." Already, in their imagination, they had returned to their

employers to be greeted with welcome, and applauded with shouts of triumph, and rewarded with the wages of iniquity. But suddenly they were roused from this reverie by an awful earthquake that convulsed the tombs, and by the appearance of two celestial beings dispatched from heaven, who, equally regardless of the soldiers' arms, and the governor's seal, rolled back the stone. Jesus exerted the power of his divinity, and, like a mighty conqueror, spoiled the powers of death, hell, and the grave. The effect was as might have been expected: "the keepers shook and became as dead men." When they saw the angels, it produced a paroxysm; but when they saw the Son of God start into life, there was a suspension of the pulsation of their hearts. Having recovered a little, they returned to the city, and as was very natural for them to do, under the extraordinary circumstances, related the facts of the case as they transpired; for this, with them, was a very awful moment, and no time to trifle.

The next thing which claims our notice, is, the means employed to prevent the belief of the resurrection of Christ after it had taken place. A council was hastily called, in which it was agreed to get the soldiers to call in the first report they made on the subject, and put forth another; namely, that while they were sleeping, his disciples came by night and stole him away. But in doing this, the council found great difficulty. The events witnessed by the soldiers had badly prepared their minds for such deceit and falsehood. The proposition was made without success, renewed with the promise of large sums of money, urged by many persuasions; and, finally, by a promise of personal indemnification, they were reluctantly induced to comply—turned round, contradicted their own first statement, and said, "While we slept, his disciples came by night and stole him away." This fabrication was badly contrived, and badly executed; for it carries its own refu-

tation on the face of it! The disciples seemed thus far not to have entered into the scheme of the resurrection; and, consequently, could have no design to induce the belief of it. And if they had, how could they hope to succeed? Few in number, inoffensive, unarmed, unaccustomed to war, scattered, and heart-broken, would they attempt an attack on these invincible regulars? Or if they relied on felony, could they hope to find all the guards asleep on an occasion like this? And if they should, could they remove the stone, enter the sepulchre, and convey off the sacred body, without waking one of this vigilant watch? And beside all this, if they were asleep, as they said, how did they know the correctness of their own statements? Has a man any consciousness when all his senses are locked up in slumber? Not any more than when he is in his grave. How then could they know, if he was removed while they slept, whether the disciples stole him, or he actually rose from the dead? And is this the best evidence for infidelity? Yes; the self-contradictory statements of these sycophantic, bribed, perjured soldiers! How strange then that contemptible infidelity should lift its deformed head, and that presumptuous deism should stalk out into the open light of Gospel day, with all the effrontery of Satan! May the God of Israel enable us this day, with a few pebbles of truth hurled from the Gospel sling, to stretch the monster in the dust!

Very different, indeed, are the evidences on the other side of the question. Let us now examine the witnesses of the resurrection of Christ. Who are they? The disciples in general, but the apostles more especially. Are they competent witnesses? They are, first, in number, viz., the apostles, and more than five hundred that saw him at once. Second, in moral character also, they are competent. They were plain, simple, honest-hearted men, whose testimony would be received in any court throughout the

civilized world, and whose conduct proved the purity of their motives; for to say, that they were base men of wicked intentions, would be to involve us in such consequences as would shock common sense. Did they desire applause? Their Master had forewarned them, that they "should be hated of all men for his sake," persecuted, brought before rulers, and that the time should come when men would think they did God service if they killed them. Did they seek wealth? Why then did they leave their occupations, and go without purse or scrip to preach the Gospel to the poor? Did they desire ease? Why then did they lead a life of unparalleled toils and sufferings, trudging on foot from town to town, in perils by land and sea; and, finally, die martyrs to the cause they advocated? Now to suppose that these were bad men, actuated by corrupt principles, would be to suppose that they voluntarily gave up their pecuniary interests, friends, ease, safety, and life itself, for what? To assert what they knew to be a base lie; and that too to promote the honor of one they knew to be an impostor, who had cruelly deceived and disappointed themselves! If any man can believe this, let him believe it.

Perhaps it may be further objected to these witnesses, that though their conduct proved them sincere and honest, yet they were ignorant and deluded men; they thought Christ rose from the dead, but were mistaken. But this is getting from bad to worse. It is virtually saying, that a dozen men, ignorant, illiterate, without experience, friends, wealth, or influence, undertook to establish a new religion in the world; and though they had to contend with the prejudices of the Jews, the ignorance and superstition of pagans, the influence of wealth and learning, the power of civil rulers, and the terrors of military force, yet did absolutely succeed in the establishment of a religion, that has out-lived all the storms and revolutions of eighteen

centuries, and now bids fair to take the world. Such monstrous absurdities carry their own refutation with them. Our witnesses, upon the whole, are both competent and credible.

The witnesses examined the facts of the case well, and did not act like persons willing to be imposed on. The first who discovered the resurrection among the disciples, were Mary and a few of her female friends. The time that they left home to visit the sepulchre, and the time that the soldiers left it for the city, were so nearly the same, that neither had arrived before the other departed. The object of the women was to embalm the sacred body, according to the customs of Asia in those days; hence, their balm and spices, and their conversation about the difficulty of moving the stone. To their astonishment they found it rolled away, and Jesus gone: disappointment added to sympathy made them weep bitterly. The angel came and said to Mary, "Why weepest thou? I know that you seek Jesus that was crucified: he is not here: he is risen as he said;" but they understood it not. Of a resurrection, they seemed to have no correct idea. Gloom, with them, covered the whole subject. The angels are gone; the women are dispersing; but Mary lingers behind. Reclining on the sepulchre, she discovers some person near her; but her eyes are suffused with tears, and she knows him not. Supposing him to be the gardener, and that he might have removed the dead body, lest it should be a nuisance to him, she said, "Sir, if you have borne my Lord hence, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." The individual significantly said, "Mary." She looked round, and there stood Jesus alive. She fell at his feet in an act of worship. He said, "Go and tell my disciples I am risen from the dead." Then with joyful haste, she fled to them. Peter and another being the first she found, set off full speed, and on their

arrival found it even so; but the others believed it not. The same day two of the disciples went to Emmaus, a village seven miles and a half from Jerusalem. On their way, Jesus fell in with them, "but their eyes were holden, that they should not know him. And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?" One answered, "Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass in these days?" He said, "What things?" They answered, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a prophet mighty in deed and word before God, and all the people:" and how they had crucified him, &c. "And besides all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done. And, certain women of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre," and brought news of his being alive. Then he said, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" He began to explain the prophets concerning himself, which was the best preaching they had ever heard. The time passed pleasantly, and before they were aware, they had reached the place of destination. He made as though he would pass on, but they besought him to tarry with them as the day was far spent. He yielded to their importunities; and at supper took bread, blessed, broke, and gave it to them. Their eyes were opened to know him, and he vanished out of their sight. With haste they returned to the city, saying, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked with us by the way?"—found the apostles gathered in a private room, and conferring on the subject, related what they had seen and heard; and while the investigation went on, which seemed to those that had not yet seen him as idle tales, they heard a voice falling with the sweetness of heavenly accents, saying, "Peace be unto

you;" and looking up, there stood Jesus in the midst. On this occasion Thomas was absent. When he returned and heard their statements, said he, "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe." At the next meeting of the disciples privately, the door being shut, Thomas attended. Jesus came, and pronounced his blessing on them; and addressing himself to Thomas said, by way of reproof, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing." When, by way of confession, "Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God!" for this was demonstration. From the very brief view we have taken of the conduct of the disciples, it appears obvious, that they were not careless in the examination of the evidences of Christ's resurrection. They did not act like persons who intended to be deceived. So far from it, never was unbelief more stubborn and unconquerable, than that of the disciples touching this subject. And never was any subject more critically looked into by so many persons; for the disciples would not believe one another, and went on to examine till demonstration was fixed on every mind.

Nor could they be mistaken by any means as to the identity of his person. If they had heard his voice merely, without seeing him, then doubts might have arisen; or if they had only seen him at a distance, it would be less certain; but when they came into his presence, entered into familiar conversation with him, and handled him, deception was impossible. Some of the apostles were his own relatives, and had been brought up with him; and all of them accompanied him during his ministry of several years; as members of his own family, they lived, journeyed, ate, slept, and labored with him, in habits of the most intimate friendship; and how could they mistake him after all

this? Can a man know his own mother's son with whom he lives daily? Then the disciples could know Christ. The being who appeared to the disciples, professing to be Christ from the dead, must have been one of four things, viz., a good angel, bad angel, phantasm, or what he professed to be. Let us then, for the sake of argument, suppose him to be a good angel. If so, he was not Christ; and if he was not Christ, then did not Christ rise from the dead; but this good angel came with a falsehood, saying, he was Christ; which cannot be reconciled to the character of a good angel, or the God that sent him. Suppose him to be a bad angel, then he was not Christ; and, of course, Christ did not rise from the dead, but Satan sent his angel to make the people believe that Christ did rise. For what purpose? To establish the truth of the Gospel, and thereby bring his own kingdom to naught! But if the devil had no better policy than this, it would be well for us. Again, to suppose him to be a mere ideal being, would be to suppose that there is no certainty in the evidence of our senses; and that, consequently, we can be certain of nothing whatever. More than once, our Savior, after his resurrection, said to his disciples, "Handle me, and feel me; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as you see me have;" which they did repeatedly. Moreover "he took a piece of a broiled fish, and an honey-comb, and did eat before them." Now, if there is any certainty in those things which are seen, heard, and felt, then there is certainty that the disciples were not mistaken in the person they took for Christ after his resurrection. Who else could have appeared and vanished at pleasure; been the subject of angelic attendance; breathed on the disciples the Holy Ghost; and in open day, amidst admiring hundreds, have ascended to heaven on a bright cloud?

To all this evidence, it is objected by infidels, that the testimony of the witnesses is contradictory; and, therefore,

incredible. This contradiction is supposed to be in the records of the four evangelists, respecting the time that the women went to the sepulchre. We deny any such contradiction. There is, indeed, a little difference in the manner of their details; but none touching any important fact. Matthew says, "As it began to dawn towards the first day of the week, came Mary," &c. To dawn is to glimmer, and refers to the twilight. Mark says, "Very early in the morning, the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun." Not after the sun appeared above the horizon, but very early, when he was only approaching towards it. Luke says, in general terms, "Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came," &c. John says, "The first day of the week cometh Mary, &c., early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away," &c. Yet dark means before it is perfectly light; for she "seeth the stone," &c. In these four records, made by different persons, and at different times and places, there is a very striking coincidence of facts, with such a difference in the manner of relating them, as is calculated to exclude all suspicion of any concerted plan or design to impose on man by the writers. They are agreed: (1.) That individuals went to the sepulchre. (2.) That they were the same individuals. (3.) Went on the same errand. (4.) The same day of the week. (5.) The same hour of the day, viz., between day-break and the appearance of the sun above the horizon. This subject admits of many forcible illustrations, which we have not now time to make. Let the people supply these; and we pass on to notice another objection to the evidences of Christ's resurrection, viz:—

Is it not possible, after all, that the whole of these accounts, by the above named authors, were forged and imposed on mankind by some shrewd person or persons? We answer, that such a forgery and imposition were

impossible, either at the time in which those things are said to have taken place, or at any subsequent period whatever. And now for the reasons. Suppose a man should publish a book, setting forth that there was in Washington City, recently, a very strange and extraordinary man, claiming to act under a divine commission, who healed the sick without medicine, restored withered and amputated limbs, gave hearing to the deaf, sight to the blind, and speech to the dumb; that he had complete control over the winds and tempests; assembled, by his secret call, the inhabitants of the Atlantic ocean in the river Potomac at pleasure; and that at certain times and places, designated in this book, raised the dead in the presence of thousands of the citizens of Washington; often had public disputes in the Capitol with the principal men of this nation; that finally he was tried before the Supreme Court of the United States on an indictment for high treason; and being condemned without any evidence against him, was, in the most public manner, executed as a malefactor; and that all the people of Washington are witnesses of these things; would any body believe this narrative? Or if it were likely to meet with public confidence abroad, would no one in that place contradict it? Certainly, they would all rise up and say, this book is a scandalous imposition; no such person was here; no such transactions took place; much less are we witnesses of these things; the representatives too of the people in Congress, would give it the lie in every district throughout the nation; and the book, with its author, would have their merited disgrace. And yet all this would be quite as plausible, as the imposition now talked of in the objection. The miracles of Christ "were not done in a corner." The recorders of them give us the times when, places where, and the living thousands by whom they were known to have taken place, mostly in and about the great city of Je-

rusalem. Yet even his enemies, that are appealed to as witnesses, deny them not, but acknowledge the facts; while his friends respond, "We are witnesses of these things."

But could not such a forgery and imposition be practiced on the world at sometime subsequent to the period in which the facts recorded in the New Testament are said to have taken place? By no means. This is as impossible as the other. Suppose some man, five hundred years hence, should publish a history of North America, and state therein, that about the middle of the eighteenth century, there was a flourishing republic in this country; but the French made war upon and destroyed it; that they erected instead thereof a cruel monarchy; established Popery by the civil law; and put to death all Protestants that would not swear allegiance to the new king, and proclaim the Pope infallible; who would believe this history? Where would be the history of the British colonies, the Declaration of Independence, history of the Revolution, Constitution of the United States, journals of Congress, bills of rights in the several states, and histories of the several Protestant Churches amongst us? Now, this argument applies with all its force to the subject before us; for as such a history of North America would be contradicted by each one of these documents, so would the New Testament, if a forgery, have been contradicted by every record of the Jewish nation, every public document in the Roman empire, and every respectable author throughout the world! But no such contradiction ever was, or ever can be brought forward.

It is a matter of consolation, that we are not necessarily obliged to range the fields of antiquity to find evidence of Christ's resurrection. We have living witnesses at hand. When he was about to leave his disconsolate children, he said, "If I go away I will send you another Com-

forter, that shall abide with you for ever. * * * When the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, is come, he shall teach you all things. * * * He shall reprove (convince) the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment." Has the sinner felt convicted for his sins? Then he is our witness that Christ rose and ascended. Does the humble child of God feel the witness of the Spirit? He testifies the same fact. Here then is "a cloud of witnesses," by whom we may know the truth of the matter. The pious minister knows that Christ has risen from the dead, when he feels him in the pulpit; the trembling sinner, when he feels his awful power; the penitent, when Christ removes all his sorrows; the faithful believer, when Christ is formed in his heart the hope of glory!

We have dying witnesses of Christ's resurrection. And here we are quite indifferent, whether you bring forward Christians or infidels. If the latter, in most instances, perhaps nine out of ten, if not ninety-nine out of a hundred of all the votaries of infidelity, dying in their senses, renounce their sentiments, either directly or indirectly, and wish then to try the virtue of the Christian's hope. If the former, how many hundreds and thousands, fondly clinging to the cross of Jesus, smile at the king of terrors, and cheerfully launch into the boundless deep. Having the love which is, not only sweeter than life, but stronger than death, they, in preference to renouncing "the Lord that bought them," suffer the confiscation of their goods, separation from friends, cruel tortures; and, finally, shout victory amidst devouring flames, and fly home to heaven.

Lastly. If Christ rose not from the dead, the Christian revelation is a fable; and if so, we know not whence we came, nor whither we go. Alike ignorant of our origin and end, we wander for a season amidst privations, toils, and sorrows, and dying, take a leap in the dark, amidst painful suspense, restless anxieties, and awful forebodings! But

Christ rose from the dead. Christianity is a solemn and glorious truth; and though we are sinners, Christ is a Savior—a loving, willing, powerful Savior, that has conquered all our enemies, sanctified the graves of the saints, and opened up a new and living way from earth to heaven. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above;" so when this mortal pilgrimage shall end, "your flesh shall rest in hope." In the morning of eternity, he, who said, "I am the resurrection and the life," will cause the day of heaven to break upon your dark and silent abode. By his transforming power you shall become all glorious and divine; and with all the redeemed from the earth, celebrate his love and power for ever. This is no fiction, no dream. Our Savior entered the territories of death, encountered the king of terrors single-handed, conquered and led him captive; and as he returned from the conflict on the third day, dragging death at his chariot wheel, proclaimed to all his disciples, "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore;" and thereby virtually renewed the promise, "Because I live, ye shall live also." Amen.

SERMON XVII.

THE PRIVILEGES OF THE POOR.

"The poor have the Gospel preached to them," Matthew xi, 5.

During the confinement of John the Baptist in prison, under the persecuting reign of Herod, he sent two of his disciples unto Christ to ask him this question, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" What John's object was in causing this inquiry to be made of Christ, has been a matter of speculation to readers of the Bible. We presume his design was to benefit those whom he sent, that they might hear for themselves, and be estab-

lished in the truth. But whatever was intended to be accomplished by putting the question, the answer given was worthy of its author. Had our Savior answered directly, "I am the promised Messiah," he would only have reiterated what he had virtually said before, without producing any other effect upon his enemies than to increase their rage; he therefore acted wisely to answer indirectly. Again, his answer indicated his sincerity. He, who is to judge all men according to their works, is willing to be judged by his own works, and simply replied, "Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them." This answer also afforded the most conclusive evidence of Messiahship, by showing himself to be the author of the very works which the ancient prophets had foretold Messiah should perform. We shall confine our remarks to the last of these signs of the Messiahship of Christ—that is, "The poor have the Gospel preached to them;" and will observe the following order:—

I. The Gospel.

II. The subjects of the Gospel.

I. The word *Gospel* is slightly modified in its meaning and application, as it stands connected with certain qualifying words and phrases. As a system of moral government, it is called "the Gospel of the kingdom;" and as a system of mercy and favor, it is called "the Gospel of the grace of God." Again, it is called "the Gospel of Christ," because it contains a history of his conception, birth, life, miracles, sufferings, death, resurrection, ascension, glorification, and intercession; and "the Gospel of peace," because it proposes terms of reconciliation to man. It is called "the Gospel of God," because he is its author; and "the everlasting Gospel," because it is the final dispensa-

tion of his mercy to man; and the consequence of accepting or rejecting it, will be endless life or endless death.

The Gospel, simply considered, means good news; hence the salutation of the angel to the shepherds, "And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Savior, which is Christ the Lord." This is altogether the best news that ever fell upon the ear, or thrilled with joy the heart of sinful man.

The Gospel is good news, because it is entitled to our full confidence. Paul said to Timothy, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation," or a true declaration, and worthy of the entire confidence of all men, "that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Millions of our fallen race have already experienced the truth of this blessed saying. We do not intend here to argue the question of the truth of the Gospel on a large scale; but to such as do not allow Paul's word, or our experience, to be sufficient testimony, we would just say, what they cannot deny, that the Gospel is true or false; and, in any event, we, who believe and practice it, are on safer ground than themselves. If the Gospel, which affords us so much consolation in life and in death, should turn out to be but a cunningly devised fable, our prospect of future bliss is still as good as their own, themselves being judges; but, on the contrary, if the Gospel is a true revelation from God to man, as we verily believe it is, then it will follow, that while infidels sink to a hell of interminable misery, Christians will be exalted to a heaven of endless life and happiness. Seeing, therefore, that we have every thing to hope, and nothing to fear from the Gospel, as practical Christians, we intend to hold fast our profession.

Again, the Gospel is good news, because it is exactly adapted to our condition and wants as sinners, revealing a

Savior just such as our pitiable circumstances require. Are we ignorant? In Christ are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Are we in darkness? He is the light of the world. Are we helpless? He has all power in heaven and in earth. Are we depraved? He is holy and harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners. Are we guilty before God? He is our all-sufficient sacrifice for sin. Do we feel that we are ruined sinners? He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. Are we affected with a sense of our lost condition? He came to seek and to save that which was lost. In short, Jesus is eyes to the blind, ears to the deaf, feet to the lame, clothing to the naked, food to the hungry, medicine to the sick, and life to the dying; and, consequently, just such a Savior as fallen, sinful man stands in need of. And to feel the whole force of this argument, we must recollect that Jesus is the only Savior, that no man cometh to the Father but by him, "neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." To reject him, therefore, is madness. Suppose we are on a point of land, surrounded on three sides by water, and on the fourth by an overpowering enemy, waging a war of extermination upon us, so that if we go forward, to the right or left, we are drowned in the sea, and if we retreat, must fall on the sword of the enemy; but suppose, further, that in this state of things, a friend should bring us a commodious vessel, and standing on the fore-deck should invite us all aboard, with a promise of safe landing beyond the reach of danger, would not every one of us press to that vessel, leading our wives and children with us? But mark our inconsistency in reference to the safety of our souls! Before and on either side of us lies the boundless ocean of eternity, behind and hard after us is death, above is the frowning Judge of all the earth, and beneath us opens a burning hell, ready

to receive us as guilty sinners; despair, with her raven wings, already fans the flames of destruction about our depraved and devoted souls, and we are ready to exclaim, "Gone, gone, for ever gone!" But hark! a voice breaks through the fearful gloom, sweeter than the music of heaven. It is the voice of Jesus, saying, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Such is the provision of the Gospel. It comes to our wounded spirits, as "good news from a far country;" and "blessed is the people that know the joyful sound."

Finally, the Gospel is good news on account of the benevolence of its character. It originated in the love of God to man, it operates in mercy and goodness; and to all its obedient subjects, it will finally result in endless felicity. But the point we wish to notice particularly, is this: while the Gospel affords much consolation to all who embrace it, to some it affords the only consolation within their reach. We allude to such as are borne down by the iron arm of oppression, or embarrassed by the most abject poverty, or bowed down with lingering disease, which renders them at once helpless and useless; or the unfortunate, whose indulgence of unhallowed passions has procured them the unenviable position of out-casts from society, all of whom, in addition to their other difficulties, may be friendless. Now deprive people, in these circumstances, of the hope of the Gospel, the last hope of the unfortunate, afflicted, and distressed, and they must be as miserable as they can be out of endless torment; but with the Gospel, and the hopes which it inspires, they may be happy still. Though oppressed, they can appeal to God and confidently expect justice in the great day of accounts. Though poor, they expect an inheritance in "the wealthy place" above. Though afflicted, they joyfully anticipate a permanent home where "there shall be no more death,

neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are done away." And though discarded here by a fastidious world, and pointed out by the finger of scorn, when they should be fed by the hand of charity, on account of their misfortunes, they hope to be so purified through faith in the blood of the Lamb, as to be finally introduced to the society of saints and angels, and crowned as the sons and daughters of the King of kings; all which hopes the Gospel secures to the humblest of its genuine converts and faithful subjects. Every man, therefore, who is a real friend to human kind, is a friend to the Gospel, which alone can render us truly happy. He that opposes the Gospel, which is the only consolation of millions of our race, opposes the best interest of man. He is not only an enemy of God and all righteousness, but a sworn enemy of his fellow creatures, a persecutor of the afflicted, distressed, and friendless, and a murderer of humanity itself; and, consequently, not worthy of the confidence of any, until he repents, retracts, and reforms. Having dwelt thus long on the nature of the Gospel, we proceed now to notice,

II. The subjects of the Gospel. While the Gospel is to be preached "to every creature"—while it is "glad tidings of great joy which shall be unto all people," let it be specially observed for the honor of our holy religion, that "the poor have the Gospel preached to them." Ancient kings were wont to send rich presents to the most wealthy and powerful rulers, to conciliate favor; but the Lord sends his choice favors to the poorest of his subjects. Thus, the Gospel, as revealed in this dispensation, was first sent to poor shepherds when watching their flocks at night; and contrary to the expectation of the Jews, it was offered to publicans and sinners, as well as to themselves. If by the poor, be understood the poor in spirit, such as feel themselves to be ruined sinners, destitute of grace, to them the

Gospel is sent in a special manner. Isaiah speaks of the ministry of Christ on this wise: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called Trees of righteousness, The planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified." We are not mistaken as to the application of this prophecy; for when Christ read and commented upon it in the synagogue, as Luke informs us, he said unto the people, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears." It is also worthy of remark, that he commenced his memorable sermon on the mount with these precious words: "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

After all, we understand the words of the text to mean that those poor in regard to temporal blessings, have the Gospel preached to them. This was true in the days of Christ, when he sat upon the mount and taught multitudes, in the open air, the way of life and salvation, composed of all classes who chose to attend and hear: true, when he said to his disciples, "Ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always:" and true, when he gave direction in a parable to his ministers to go into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in "the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind" to the Gospel supper. Many of this class obtained the true riches; for James said, "Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?" And it is still true,

that the poor have the Gospel preached to them, at least in some places. The Wesleys and their fellow-laborers followed the example of Christ and his apostles, preaching not only in houses consecrated for public worship, but also in private dwellings, and even in streets and fields. Yes, our fathers were not ashamed to stand up at the corner of the street, in the market, in the open field, under the forest trees, or on a tomb-stone, and deliver the Gospel message. The consequence was, thousands of the poor, previously perishing for the bread of life, poured out from the alleys, the factories, and the mines, eagerly thronged round the man of God who cared for their souls, and were fed with "meat indeed and drink indeed." These efforts were attended and followed with a revival of the work of God, which continues to this day. Thus, while the clergy, who were zealous for order, spent much of their time in denouncing Wesley and his associates as schismatics, fanatics, and madmen, God was giving to these, his persecuted servants, the souls of the poor, to shine as stars in their crown of rejoicing. Many of Wesley's sons still walk in his footsteps, resorting, when necessary, to street and field preaching, for the special benefit of the poor and the out-casts of society, who have no stated place of worship where they feel free to attend. A butcher's block in the market, or a stump in the commons, answers for the pulpit of an extemporaneous preacher, whose heart is in the work; but a silent grove, when the weather is mild and calm, is the best place for preaching in the world. The forest and the open heavens are friendly to the spirit of devotion; while the sound of prayer, of praise, and of instruction from the pulpit, spreads in open space without the obstruction of walls, like the circular wave on smooth water. It is a well ascertained fact, that a man can be heard by some four times as many people out of doors as he can within doors, provided the atmosphere be warm and

calm. Hence, it was, that Mr. Wesley, who was by no means vociferous, could be heard by twenty thousand people in Moorfield Commons; and Mr. Whitefield, whose voice was stronger, could, according to Dr. Franklin's calculation, have been distinctly heard by thirty thousand from the court-house steps in Philadelphia. So far as our own little experience is any test of the principle, it is quite as easy to address four thousand people under a pleasant grove, as one thousand in a chapel.

Several things, in Methodist economy, are favorable to the accomplishment of the glorious enterprise of preaching the Gospel to the poor. One is the plan of building chapels plain, cheap, and with free seats. Where churches are built in costly style, with pews to rent or sell, the poor, who are unable to build, buy or rent, are virtually excluded from houses of worship, and must live without the means of grace, or worship out of doors, or meet in small companies in their own dwellings. Pewed churches are intended to accommodate select congregations; and a thinly attended house is therefore a natural, if not necessary part of the system. It begins, progresses, and terminates in aristocracy. We have heard some of the advocates of pewed chapels, who seemed to possess more honesty than logical skill, use this argument: when the seats are free, every body can attend that chooses, and it is very unpleasant to have such notorious sinners in the congregation; but if the seats are sold or rented, we can keep them out. Yes, truly, you could keep them out of a pewed church, and out of heaven, and answer for it when their blood shall be required of you. But are you willing to exclude from the ministry of the Gospel, those who need it most, and take the responsibility on yourself? If so, where is your love for souls, and your zeal for Christ? And what becomes of your doctrine of general atonement and possible salvation for all men? Believers in the doc-

trine of unconditional election and reprobation might go for pews and select congregations with some show of consistency; but among us, who teach and believe that God is no respecter of persons, but freely offers life and salvation to all, through him who "tasted death for every man," free grace and free seats should always be associated together. Where this part of our excellent Methodism is strictly adhered to, we generally have large congregations, and a prosperous state of the work, and are fully able to vie with, and usually to take the lead of other Churches; but where the pew system obtains among us, we are generally crippled in our operations, and become feeble and inefficient. We know it is the custom in many pewed chapels to leave certain seats free for the accommodation of such as cannot buy or rent, but it seems to answer almost no purpose, except to give offense. Who is willing, thus publicly, to advertise his poverty or misfortune, his want of ability or inclination to afford himself a place in church, by taking "the poor seats?" Such humility is not to be expected in those who need the instruction of the Gospel most. Beside, to require it, is not only uncharitable and unwise, but unscriptural. Such conduct in professed Christians meets with a merited rebuke in the following language of St. James:—

"My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. For if there come unto your assembly, a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; and ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts? Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised

to them that love him? But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment-seats? Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called? If ye fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, ye do well: but if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors."

If it be said, the "assembly" here spoken of was a civil, and not a religious assembly, we reply, that is by no means certain. But suppose it were so, the argument injures rather than benefits your cause; for if it be wrong to "have the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons" in a civil assembly, how much more so in a religious meeting? Here, at least, it should be admissible for the rich and the poor to meet together, seeing the Lord is the maker of them all, "and the poor have the Gospel preached to them."

Another regulation among us, which greatly favors the enterprise of preaching the Gospel to the poor, is, an itinerant ministry, aided by a local ministry, both being materially different from a settled ministry. The itinerant plan of spreading the Gospel, going into all the world and preaching the Gospel to every creature, as first established by Christ, and practiced by his apostles, and which is now substantially in use among the Methodists, is well adapted to the wants of the poorer classes of society, as well as all other classes. On this plan, some dozen or twenty congregations may be embraced in one circuit, under the pastoral care of one minister, who, with the aid of his colleagues, can afford them regularly the ministry of the word, the ordinances, and pastoral instruction; and the expense, though it could not be borne by one or two of these societies, when divided among the whole, is scarcely felt. This plan of preaching and teaching affords more privileges

for the same amount of expense than any other, and perhaps does more good to the people of this country than all others put together; hundreds of neighborhoods, which are unable to support settled ministers, and, so far as they are concerned, would still perish for lack of knowledge, are by our traveling and local preachers fed with the bread of life. Where the people can bear the expense, we form them into a circuit; and when they cannot, we form them into a mission, draw the funds to support the Gospel among them from the Missionary Society, "and the poor have the Gospel preached to them."

We are far from supposing that all the good done in the world is done through our instrumentality; but we do believe that, as a people, the Methodists are specially charged with responsible duties in reference to the poor; for if we do not afford them the means of grace, with our extensive ministry, our liberal doctrines, and chapels with free seats, who will? Here then is work enough to employ our heads, and hands, and hearts, time, money, gifts and graces. The heathen world is full of God's poor, perishing for lack of knowledge, and we have but few there to teach them the way of life. Some, indeed, have taken their lives in their hand, left their country and friends behind, and gone to distant regions to hold up before the heathen the light of life, and tell them of Jesus and his dying love; some have fallen in the work, and others are needed to supply their place. In reference to these, some touching incidents have occurred; one of which we beg leave here to recite. When the lamented young Stocker was undergoing an examination before the Oneida conference, in 1838, with reference to his being ordained and sent missionary to Africa, he was asked if he did not know that the climate of Africa was considered unfriendly to the constitution of white men, and that he would be very liable to disease and death in that country? To which he

replied in the affirmative. He was then asked, if, under all those circumstances, he was still inclined to go? And his answer was, "None of these things move me." But his words moved the hearts of all who heard them, so that a spirit of weeping came upon us. His bones now rest near those of Cox, Wright, Barton, and others.

We have also many poor in our own country—white, red, and colored, to whom the Gospel must be fully preached; and the work is in rapid progress. A brother, when urging the claims of the poor, in an ordination sermon before the Mississippi conference, in 1838, after quoting the words of Jesus, "The poor have the Gospel preached to them," added, "It is their privilege to have it, they ought to have it, they must have it." A voice from that part of the congregation where the preachers sat was heard proclaiming with emphasis, "They shall have it." To which the speaker and many others responded, "Amen;" and all seemed to be pleased with the thing in prospect; but the main point is to give it to them practically. How are they to obtain it? Go with the missionary as he traverses the rice dams of the Savannah to visit the hut of the sick and dying African, and read to him the word and promise of God; attend him on the week-day, when he collects the children of the slaves and catechises them; or on the Lord's day, when he journeys on foot from one congregation of colored people to another, and preaches Jesus and the resurrection to them, while the tears of penitence and tears of joy commingle, and fall like showers of rain all around him, and you will have a practical illustration of the truth, "The poor have the Gospel preached to them."

Again, follow the missionary to the wilderness, the abode of red men. Listen while he gives the "good talk" to the children of the woods; then hear them with unaffected simplicity relate in council, or in love feast, the

effects of his preaching on their hearts and lives, and you will be convinced that "the poor have the Gospel preached to them." Much time, labor, and money have been expended on our Indian missions, but the stock is mostly productive; and if nothing had been accomplished in any other mission, the thousand converts recently obtained among the Flat-heads in Oregon Territory, are well worth the whole expense of the Society on Indian missions. This extraordinary work of grace fully explains what Spirit it was that moved, and what hand it was that guided the Flat-head Chiefs some years since, in a perilous journey of some three thousand miles through a wilderness infested with murderous tribes to St. Louis, to make inquiry about the white-man's Book, the white-man's religion, and the white-man's God. This work of grace also explains what Spirit it was that moved the Lees and their associates to leave their home and friends in New England, and take up their abode in that remote and solitary region, where it may be said truly, "The poor have the Gospel preached to them."

We must not forget to make a passing remark on the poor of our own color, our former friends and neighbors, who have moved off to the new countries, where, unless found by the itinerant missionary, they must for a long time be destitute of the regular ministry of the Gospel, together with their children and their new neighbors; but on our plan of operation, before their cabins are completed, the traveling preacher is there ready to consecrate them as class-rooms and chapels; for "the poor have the Gospel preached to them."

And, now, could you accompany one of these laborious itinerants around his frontier circuit, you would have a practical comment on our text, worth more than all we have been able to say on the subject; but as that cannot be, allow us to attempt a brief description of his situation and

labor for one day, which may serve as a specimen of the whole. The dwelling where he passes the night is rudely constructed of logs, covered with clapboards, and floored with puncheons; it contains but one room for the accommodation of the family and their guest; but that one is quite useful, as it answers for parlor, dining-room, kitchen, bed-chamber, study, class-room, and chapel. When the preacher rises early in the morning, his first duty, after prayer and praise, is, the study of the Bible; which, if the weather be warm, he performs out of doors under the spreading branches of the trees; or, if cold, he may be honored with a seat in one corner, to read by the light which comes down the broad chimney—a tolerable substitute for glass windows. Having finished his morning lesson, and received his simple repast, possibly consisting of wild meat, corn-cake, and spice-wood tea, he blesses his kind benefactors in the name of the Lord, and departs for his next appointment. While performing a journey of some fifteen miles on horse-back, over hill and vale, through an unbroken forest, he has a fine opportunity for thought and preparation to appear before his congregation. Nothing appears to divert his attention, except he may occasionally observe the bound of a wild deer, or be startled by the screech of an owl, or the shriek of a panther. When he reaches the point of destination, he sees no flourishing village, or steeple-house—hears no church bell, or organ; but he sees horses tied to the branches of the trees around a log school-house, or log cabin, and hears within the sound of sacred song by the waiting congregation early in attendance. He retires a few minutes to kneel in prayer, and ask God's blessing on himself and his hearers. The carpet on which he kneels is formed of the fallen leaves of the forest trees, the desk on which he reclines is an old mossy log, and the canopy under which he worships the open heavens. Here he pleads for a bles-

sing in the name of Christ. As he rises from prayer, Jesus whispers in his ear of faith, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world." As he enters the door, every eye turned on the minister seems to say, welcome thou blessed of the Lord. He reads his chapter, and gives out the excellent hymn, commencing thus:—

> "Jesus, my all, to heaven is gone;
> He whom I fix my hopes upon:
> His track I see, and I'll pursue
> The narrow way, till him I view."

The people all rise and sing together with the spirit and with the understanding; they then kneel in prayer with much simplicity and devotion; the preacher prays like one talking with God, and the people heartily respond, Amen. When they rise and have sung a song of Zion, the minister reads his text, possibly in these words: "The poor have the Gospel preached to them." He speaks as the oracles of God, in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. Sinners are cut to the heart, as by the sword of the Spirit; penitents prove that the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation; the preacher is clothed with light as with a garment, and the saints of God shout aloud for joy. The class meeting which follows the sermon is like a feast of marrow to the soul, and the statements of the members are living testimonies of the power of saving grace: true converts flow into the Church in the wilderness, such as shall be everlastingly saved; and who in worlds of light and glory will have occasion to rejoice that they ever experienced this glorious truth, "The poor have the Gospel preached to them."

SERMON XVIII.

NAAMAN, THE LEPER, HEALED.

"And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?" 2 Kings v, 13.

These words refer to Naaman, who, the sacred historian tells us, was a great man. But as it is frequently the case, that men of distinguished abilities have some deep mortification connected with their history to counteract pride, so it was with Naaman, who "was great with his master, and honorable, because by him the Lord had given deliverance unto Syria: and was a mighty man in valor, but he was a leper."

The circumstances of his cure were very remarkable. The Syrians warred with Israel, and went out by companies; and in one of their campaigns, they brought captive from Israel a little maid, and she waited on Naaman's wife. And while she witnessed, daily, the grievous affliction of her master, she said to her mistress, "Would to God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy." Perhaps giving, at the same time, a more perfect history of Elisha, the great prophet of Israel, than is here recorded. Now when this got to the king of Syria, he resolved on sending his afflicted officer to be cured. But great people must have great ways. So he sends him to Jehoram, king of Israel, to get him to superintend the cure, lading his general with ten talents of silver, six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment, as a kind of kingly present for benefits to be conferred on the patient. To make all complete, Ben-hadad, king of Syria, addressed a letter to Jehoram, king of Israel, requesting him to recover Naaman from his leprosy. When Jehoram read the letter, he concluded,

that Ben-hadad, knowing the thing to be impossible, only designed contention and war; consequently, he was exceedingly vexed, and rent his clothes, saying, "Am I a God, to kill and make alive, that he hath sent to me to recover a man from his leprosy? See how he seeketh a quarrel against me."

When Elisha heard of these things, he sent unto the king, saying, "Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? Send him to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel:" of which the king appears to have been ignorant, as is too often the case with men high in rank. Then Naaman repaired to the house of the prophet, and with his chariot, horses, and servants, stood before the door, when Elisha sent a messenger to direct him to wash seven times in the river Jordan. At this reception, and with such a prescription, Naaman was disgusted, and turned off in a rage, saying, "Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper. Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel?" Then it was, that his servants addressed him in the language of the text, "And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?" Let us now consider,

I. The sickness of Naaman, and the resemblance it bears to man's disease.

The leprosy was considered one of the most distressing and humiliating of all the afflictions among the ancients. The patient was covered with a coated substance like white scales; the eyes were red and swollen; the hair was stiffened; and it was attended with a severe itching sensation. This disease is perhaps, of all others, the most

striking emblem of sin. To trace the analogy between them, we may fix on a few particulars. That the leprosy was a very powerful disease, may be known from its symptoms and effects; and so of sin. See the raging epidemic of our fallen nature! how it disorders every thing in society. Dissipation, profanity, licentiousness and fraud abound, until "the earth is filled with violence." Strong, indeed, must be the fountain from whence all these streams of iniquity flow. Well may it be said by the prophet, "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint."

The leprosy is diffusive. It appears first in a small white spot, and spreads until every part is covered, and the whole man affected. Now, this is the nature of sin. Men seldom become openly wicked of a sudden. They generally begin to show their natural corruption on a small scale; for vice is progressive. The well educated youth, when first released from parental authority, is strictly moral; and the first examples of distinguished wickedness he meets with fill his mind with horror; but the second strike him with less force, and so on, until they cease to affect him at all. Thus prepared by example, he begins to participate in some of the less criminal follies of the world, and then advances as his conscience will bear it, till he, who was once sober, discreet, and amiable, becomes a champion in folly, and a ring-leader in vice. And when we have once thrown off the fear of God, where may we promise ourselves to stop?

Leprosy is contagious; and, hence, the law of Moses required the leprous person to be excluded from the congregation of Israel. And, in a qualified sense, at least, so is sin. Being formed for society and social life, the examples of others influence us; and their spirit, whether good or bad, is readily imbibed. Hence, while the pious have their hands strengthened by their brethren, the impious are more hardened in sin by the society of the wicked. And on this

principle are founded all the precepts of the Gospel which require our separation from the ungodly, allowing us to intermingle with them only so far as necessary business, and the offices of kindness to their souls and bodies demand. "How can two walk together, except they be agreed?" Let this make us cautious how we form connections and associations in the world, especially those for life. Paul's precept is good: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." The way to heaven is difficult enough at best, even when we have all the aid we can get; how then must it be when our nearest connections, our constant inmates are, not only in our way, but opposed to every step we take in the way of righteousness? Can two opposite courses lead to the same point? Suppose here are two neighbors setting out on a journey, one goes eastward, and the other westward. Being both citizens of the same town, they start together; but when they reach the corner of the square, how will they manage? The one traveling east must give his journey over and go with his friend; or the one traveling west abandon his journey and go with his neighbor: otherwise, there will be a separation. The application is easy. Two persons agree to share the ills and pleasures of life together in the marriage state—one a Christian, the other an infidel; of course, one is bound for heaven, and the other for hell. Now the Christian must get him converted and turned towards heaven, or the infidel must induce her to renounce Christ and go with him to hell; or there must be a present separation of feelings, purposes, pursuits, and enjoyments, and in the end a separation for ever. And as we are by nature far more prone to evil than good, so there is far stronger probability in such a case that the infidel will prevail than the other. "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you; and will be a Father unto you,

and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

The leprosy is lothsome; so much so, that the eastern people generally viewed it as a disease inflicted by Providence, to punish the victim for some uncommon crime or crimes. In confirmation of this, we refer to the case of Gehazi, who, having fraudulently got the money and raiment from Naaman, after his cure, by the mean artifices of deceit and falsehood, was addressed by the prophet Elisha thus: "The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee and to thy seed for ever. And he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow." But what is so lothsome as sin, producing "wounds, bruises, and putrifying sores?" What occasions all the disgrace amongst mortals, at the sight of which virtue sickens, and piety bleeds? Whence the loss of confidence in commerce? Whence the broils in civil, and the carnage in military operations? What causes that once lovely female to weep tears of despondency over a fallen reputation? Why are our jails and state prisons filled with wretched criminals and convicts? All these are the offspring of rebellion against God. What then can be so hateful in his sight, and in the sight of all holy beings, as sin? The leper was excluded from the congregation of Israel for a season; but the finally impenitent sinner will "be driven from the presence of God, and the glory of his power," for ever and ever. Let us now,

II. Notice Naaman's cure.

There was no medicine that reached the case of a leper; and despairing of any relief in that way, he usually threw himself entirely on the mercy of God. There was, indeed, a kind of ceremonial atonement made for him, calculated to inspire his faith in the promised Savior. Two birds were taken; one of them slain, and the blood thereof was put in a basin, with hysop, &c.; and the living bird, being dipped

in the blood of the slain bird, was turned loose. This, it is thought, was typical of the cleansing of the sinner's heart, through faith in the blood of Christ, who is the only physician that can cure our sin-sick souls, or heal our wounded spirits; hence the danger and folly of rejecting him. If we had a wasting consumption preying on our vitals, and were given over by friends and physicians, and an extraordinary person were to call on us and produce satisfactory evidence that he could and would restore us to health, would we not employ him? Most certainly; and that without regard to price. Mark then our inconsistency! we have worse than the slow consumption; an old, hereditary complaint, affecting all the powers of soul and body, which will infallibly bring us down to the dust; for "the wages of sin is death." And moreover, if we die in sin, we must die "the second death," die for ever; and still live to feel our anguish! But here is one that can relieve. He is both able and willing; "his power is present to heal." Hear him, "He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live again: he that liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die," eternally. Leprous soul, come to Christ, his skill is great, and his terms are easy; even without money or price. Naaman's washing in Jordan was a substitute for the ceremonial purification, above described.

But he had objections to the means prescribed; they were too simple for one of his elevated rank in life. If silver, gold, and raiment could have bought relief, he was ready to pay in advance; or if some great military achievement would have sufficed, he was ready to perform it; but when it was only to wash in Jordan, he was offended, and exclaimed, "Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me," &c.; that is, he wished not only Elisha, but Elisha's God to come down to his terms. But base as this was, how many of our day are guilty of the same? We

want salvation, but we want it on our own terms: the Lord cannot come to our terms, and we will not go to his. If religion was fashionable, and cost so much that common people could not buy it, the rich and great would have it; yea, they would have it then, if it cost sea voyages, land tours, all their money, and mortgages on their whole estates; but when God offers to give it to them, it does not suit their fancy. They conclude that the poor and ignorant may have it on such terms, but it is not suitable to their dignity. What! we repent, fall on our knees, wring our hands in sorrow, and ask God to have mercy on us? No, no. "Who is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit shall we have, if we pray unto him?"

After all, when Naaman consented to make the experiment, it proved successful; "his flesh came like the flesh of a little child;" the scaly substance on the surface disappeared, and the new skin forming appeared tender as that of the infant. In like manner, all who faithfully use the means appointed of God, find them to have the desired effect, and prove that it is not a vain thing to serve God; for though we may not be able, on any philosophical principle, to see the connection between the means and the end, yet we can feel in our souls "Christ formed the hope of glory," and that is enough.

III. We must now close with a few inferences from the whole.

God works by means. We do not say he is dependent on means; but, in general, he chooses to work by them: otherwise, why was it necessary for Naaman to travel from one kingdom to another; to visit the prophet; and thence repair to the river Jordan, which, of itself, had no healing qualities over other waters, and bathe therein seven times, only that the Lord works by means? Hence, we say, they are entirely necessary to our salvation, without attaching either merit to them, or glory to ourselves.

"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling: for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

The grace of God in the heart makes men humble. When Naaman approached the door of the prophet, he had a great deal of self-exaltation. How many airs and flourishes he showed, riding in all the pomp of state, with his retinue of servants! We imagine he said in his heart, how high I stand in my nation! My name, how it sounds! My war achievements, how far they are known! His proud heart rebelled at the plain reception he met with; but when he was healed, behold, how humble! What concessions and humiliations before the prophet! So of all who obtain mercy. The high-minded are brought low; the extravagant become plain; the coxcomb is turned into a rational being; and the scornful belle into a modest saint, to shine in all the beauties of holiness.

When God's people are called to suffer, it is for wise purposes. This is fully verified in the case of the little Israelitish maid alluded to in the introduction. Nothing could be more affecting than to see this young innocent, torn from her friends and country, led captive by lawless free-booters to a strange land, exposed to the outrages of a licentious soldiery, and surrounded with all the terrors of a Syrian camp. But Jehovah was her friend, and soon the wisdom of his providence begins to be developed. By her declaration, confidence is inspired in the king of Syria; an expedition is fitted out to the holy land; the glory of the prophetic office revealed; the knowledge of the true God extended, and heathens bow before him in distant countries. The God of Israel can do great things by small means. Say not, we have no gifts. Open your mouths wide, and he will fill them. Trust in him. Go on, and suffer willingly; "for all things work together for good to them that love God." To him be glory now and ever. Amen.

SERMON XIX.

THE WAY TO HEAVEN.

"Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me," Matthew xvi, 24.

Our Savior was a very plain preacher. He exposed all the errors, sins, and follies of mankind in a pointed manner. This, of course, roused the vicious principles of their fallen nature, and made him some enemies, especially among the self-righteous; yet he manifested such meekness of wisdom, persuasive eloquence, and purity of life and motives, as made him greatly admired, and constantly followed by thousands. But amongst the immense crowds of people that thronged after him, there was a variety of characters, influenced by various motives. Some sincerely desired to learn the will of God, that they might do it; others were prompted by a spirit of captiousness and persecution; some, perhaps, had no other inducement to hear him than to gratify vain curiosity; and some followed him for the loaves and fishes.

This made it the more necessary that he should explain to the people the only way in which they could follow him acceptably, viz: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." Here, as in other places, practical piety is made to consist of two grand principles—shunning all evil, and pursuing all good. Thus Isaiah said, "Cease to do evil; learn to do well." Paul said, "Lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset you; and run with patience the race set before you, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of your faith;" and Christ would have us to deny ourselves of evil, and follow him, bearing our cross.

Let it be observed, Christ addressed himself particularly to his disciples; they were his scholars or learners. He is

compared to a teacher, and his Church to a school. Thus he says, "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly;" and to learn of this lowly teacher, we must enter into his spirit. Anciently, it was the custom for scholars to take lessons sitting at the master's feet; hence, Mary "sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word;" and Paul "was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel" the great. We, too, should remember our ignorance of the things of God, humble ourselves before him, and seek to become wise unto salvation, by receiving the wholesome admonition of James in these words: "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness, and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the ingrafted word, which is able to save your souls."

Before we commence the main discussion of the subject, permit us to observe, that in preaching the great doctrines of the Gospel, we frequently overlook a number of smaller things; which, however, are of much importance to us, having considerable influence on our character and usefulness as Christians. If, therefore, we should, on this occasion, deal in what some people call little things, you will, we trust, bear with our simplicity. We shall proceed to notice,

I. The things of which we are to deny ourselves.

II. The duties which we are to perform.

1. We are to deny ourselves of needless self-indulgence, to which we are naturally prone in thought, word, and deed. In our thoughts, we should carefully deny ourselves the practice of dwelling on every subject that is low, groveling, polluting, or in any wise calculated to inflame the passions of pride, anger, revenge, and, especially, any thing impious, or offensive to God, pursuing trains of dignified reflection on profitable subjects, particularly sacred subjects, and thus "bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." This is certainly possible; for though we cannot prevent the world, flesh, and Satan, from

suggesting evil thoughts to us, yet we are no more obliged to cherish them, than we would be to entertain robbers, who come and seek admittance into our houses for the purpose of plundering them. In our words, we should deny ourselves every thing vulgar, profane, trifling, unkind, untrue, slanderous, or unnecessarily offensive. The power of articulation, so cultivated as to enable us readily to interchange thoughts on various subjects, is one of the choice temporal blessings of God to man. What a pity it is, that such a noble faculty should ever be perverted to the base purposes of profanity, blasphemy, persecution, falsehood, slander, and evil speaking, instead of being employed in giving instruction and comfort to man, or in offering prayer and praise to God! Respecting our actions, we should regulate them in all important cases by "the law and the testimony;" and in things of minor importance, according to our best discretion; at all times, denying ourselves of whatever is wrong. We know that some say, "We might as well do a thing as to think it." But would you as soon a man would cheat you out of your estate, as to think of it, or intend it? To think evil is bad, to speak evil is worse, but to do evil is worst of all.

2. We must deny ourselves needless recreations. Some relaxation from business and study, we know, is proper; but this may be had, sufficiently, by a change of employment, taking a walk, calling on a friend for social conversation, reading a periodical, or some book of memoirs, or travels, or any other innocent way we may choose. Certainly it is not necessary to this recreation, that we should go to a fashionable party, where they deal in levity, or evil speaking; or to a barbecue, to hear them swear and drink toasts; or a ball, to revel and dance; or a circus, to see monkies ride ponies, for the entertainment of fools; or a gambling-room, to cheat and wrangle; or a theatre, to destroy, in our minds, all desire for solid

improvement, squander our money, make our young men more effeminate, and our young females less modest; and, worse than all, blast all religious impressions of the heart. All of these are not only needless, but sinful recreations; and, therefore, we must deny ourselves of them.

3. We should deny ourselves all needless ornaments. Here we begin to tread upon delicate ground; for there are many in these days of refinement, who think that it is not only unnecessary for ministers to discuss such subjects as that of dress in the pulpit, but that it is letting themselves down below the dignity of the sacred office! What a misfortune it is then, that such wise people did not live in the days of the prophets and apostles; for they had no more judgment than to declaim frequently, pointedly, and powerfully, against vain superfluities of all kinds! Thus, Isaiah said, "Moreover the Lord saith, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet: therefore the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and Jehovah will expose their nakedness. In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of their tinkling ornaments about their feet, and their cauls, and their round tires like the moon, the chains, and the bracelets, and the mufflers, the bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the head-bands, and the tablets, and the ear-rings, the rings, and nose-jewels, the changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wimples, and the crisping-pins, the glasses, and the fine linen, and the hoods, and the vails. And it shall come to pass, that instead of perfume a putrid ulcer; and instead of a girdle a rent; and instead of well set hair baldness; and instead of a stomacher a girding of sackcloth: and a sun-burnt skin instead of beauty." (See Benson's translation.) Also, Paul said to Timothy, "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in

modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array, but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works." And again, Peter said, "Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price."

These quotations may serve to show, that if ministers are degraded by condemning superfluities, they are still in honorable company, that of the prophets and apostles; and that whoever indulges in any superfluous ornaments, displeases God; for he as pointedly forbids them as he does any thing else. "But," says one, "we can well afford it; for we deal with our own money, buy what we want, and pay for all we get." And how does it come to pass, that you are in such easy circumstances? By whose providence are you thus favored with plenty? "What hast thou that thou hast not received?" We wish you to consider, our respected hearers, that you are stewards of God in these matters, and that all you have is only lent to you by him, which he can take away at any time. And what does he require you to do with the capital he has intrusted you with? After retaining enough to carry on necessary business, and supply the reasonable wants of yourselves and families, to give the balance, much or little, to aid the cause of piety, and the cause of humanity; and thus "make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations." We ask then, can you afford to take the Lord's money intrusted with you for these noble objects, and apply it to another and an opposite use, by indulging in superfluities? Can you, especially, who are professors of religion, afford to break the rules of the Church, the

precepts of the Gospel, and inflict deep wounds on the pious feelings of your brethren? Can any one afford to offend God knowingly? Or can any people afford to injure themselves? We would ask, respectfully, if that young female can afford to environ her delicate frame with that engine of death, which now presents her in a distorted form, deprives her of free respiration, and is laying the foundation of a fatal decline of health? Or can that fashionable young man afford to contract his waist with a girdle, until he is both deformed and helpless? In a word, can any of us afford to cultivate in our hearts the most foolish, most troublesome, most hateful, and most self-destructive of all passions? We mean pride.

But the people say, "These things do not make us proud." What things? Superfluous ornaments. This, we think, is a mistake; for pride is a principle capable of being excited by a mere trifle; and the smaller the consideration, the more contemptible the passion appears; thus, he who is proud of a watch key, is more silly than he who is proud of a stately edifice. However, we will suppose, for the sake of argument, that these things do not increase our pride; yet they are the certain proofs that we are proud. If I see a horse in the commons with a yoke on, my natural conclusion is, that horse is a rogue. "But," say you, "having a yoke on, does not make him a rogue." True, I answer, yet if he was not a rogue, he would not have it on. In like manner, superfluous ornaments, some say, do not make them proud. Be it so; but if they were not proud, they would not have them on. It will not be contended, that they make us cooler in the summer, or warmer in the winter; that they make us wiser, better, more wealthy, healthy, or useful. But are we to allow of no improvements, no changes of fashion in dress? Certainly, we are. Any change for economy, comfort, convenience, or plainness, is admissible. But is it not a fact,

that many of the most expensive fashions do not, and indeed cannot, answer any purpose but to gratify our vanity? Suffer us to call some of them by name, as specimens of the whole: A gold ring on the finger, or hung to the ear; a gold breast-pin or guard-chain; a gold headed staff; an artificial flower on the bonnet; a string of gold beads hung round the neck; a large bunch of some dead person's hair hung on the side of the face; a feathered head-dress, so frightful as to remind us of the monster in the revelation with seven heads and ten horns. Were these follies confined wholly to people of the world, "dead in trespasses and in sins," we would feel less zealous in our opposition to them. But how unsuitable, trifling, and sinful it is, for persons to indulge in them, who, as disciples of Christ, should be dead to the world, always bearing about in their bodies the dying of the Lord Jesus; not conformed to the world, but glorying in the cross of Christ: and more especially our Methodist brethren and sisters, who have been better instructed on the subject. They offend with their eyes open, knowing that God forbids the wearing of gold and costly array, as plainly as he forbids any sin.

4. He that would follow Christ and get to heaven, must deny himself of all evil. Every sin, though as convenient as a "right hand," or near our hearts as a "right eye," must be "cut off," or "broken off by righteousness;" for "he that sinneth is of the devil," and has no inheritance in the kingdom of God; for "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God of Sabaoth."

II. The duties we are to perform.

1. We must take up our cross; which, literally, means only a frame of wood, made in the form of an X, or of a T, on which malefactors and wicked slaves were executed in the Roman empire: and to cast as much odium as possible on him, this kind of torture was chosen for our blessed

Redeemer. But, figuratively, in the sense in which we are to bear it, the cross is that which comes across our evil propensities, and mortifies our corrupt nature. This cross is to be borne daily; for Christ saith, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." But wherein do some, yea many, who are the professed disciples of Jesus, bear a daily cross? Is it by self-mortification? reproving their neighbors for sin? or a conscientious performance of all religious duties, however painful? Let them answer to God for themselves. The faithful soul does this gladly. Thus, Paul said, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

2. We are to follow Christ; or imitate him in our lives and conversation. Some say, we must do in all things as he did; but this would require a forty days' entire abstinence from food, a crucifixion literally, and many things unreasonable. Perhaps, all that is meant by following Christ, might be properly reduced to two general rules—obedience to God's commandments, respecting all outward duties; and seeking "the mind that was in Christ," who was holy, and harmless, and undefiled, and separate from sinners. Thus we should cultivate all the graces of the Spirit, and be "renewed in the spirit of our minds," after the image of him that created us.

3. We must follow him to the end: follow him, whether in wealth or poverty, prosperity or adversity, revivals or declensions: follow him, let the way be rough or smooth, the journey long or short. Directed by the pillar of cloud and pillar of fire, we must press on, until we pass through the howling wilderness, and cross the Jordan of death; and then we will follow him into heaven, and be numbered with those, of whom it is said, "These are they that follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth."

In conclusion, we remark, from the view taken of this subject, which points us the way to heaven, it appears, that there is no time to lose, none for trifling, if we would receive the inheritance prepared for the saints in light. Some, when Christ calls them to go this way, refuse, saying, "I pray thee have me excused." When they call upon him to help them, he may say, "Because I have called and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at naught all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity: I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me; for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord: they would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices." Come, then, ye souls favored by Heaven with the sound of the Gospel, and let us seek him now, and "follow on to know the Lord," until we arrive at the spiritual Canaan. If any will come after our Master, let them now deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow him. Amen.

SERMON XX.

THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF SINNERS.

"But one sinner destroyeth much good," Ecclesiastes ix, 18.

This book, called Ecclesiastes, is supposed to have been written by Solomon, and to contain the humble confession of all his follies. If so, the words before us, are the result of much experience and observation, as well as inspiration. The context illustrates the excellency of wisdom, in con-

trast with the ruinous effects of sin. The author says, "This wisdom have I seen also under the sun, and it seemed great unto me: there was a little city, and few men within it; and there came a great king against it, and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it: now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city; yet no man remembered that same poor man." This is probably a parable designed to recommend wisdom, which, though it may not have been so intended, naturally reminds us of the city or Church of God, with comparatively few inhabitants, besieged by Satan, surrounded with the fortifications of sin and error, and yet delivered by Christ, who wandered a poor stranger on earth, but possessed sufficient wisdom and power to defeat all the powers of darkness, and for which man is too ungrateful; from all which, the author makes this inference, "Wisdom is better than weapons of war: but one sinner destroyeth much good." In the words of our choice, we have,

I. A character referred to—this we shall delineate.

II. A fact stated—this we shall illustrate and confirm.

I. The character referred to, is a sinner. "Sin," says an author, "is the want of moral perfection." This language appears to be too weak for the Scriptural view of the subject. Paul says, "Sin is the trangression of the law;" which implies, a rule of life, the knowledge of it, power to keep it, and a willful violation of it. To say all in a few words, sin is rebellion against God; a sinner is a transgressor of his law, or a rebel against him, according to the law he is under, whether of conscience or revelation.

In view of this definition, where shall we go to find, or rather not to find sinners? They abound in all ages, and in all parts of the inhabited world; amongst all divisions of our race, whether Pagans, Jews, Mohammedans, or Christians; of all colors, white, black, tawny, olive brown, or

copper red; in all states of mental improvement, as savage, civilized, simple or learned; in all relations, whether rulers, subjects, masters, or servants; in all places, such as cities, towns, villages, forests, mansions, offices of state, shops, farms, temples, churches, cottages, prisons; all around us, in solid columns now before us.

II. A fact stated—namely, "One sinner destroyeth much good." This fact, we shall illustrate and confirm by a number of examples; and,

1. The devil: the oldest and worst of sinners, rapid in flight, strong in forces, old in experience, well-skilled in battle, and deep-rooted in malice against God and his people; who can enumerate the good he destroys, and the mischief he effects?

2. Adam, whose act, as natural and federal head of our race, affected his whole posterity as well as himself; turning the blooming garden of God into a howling waste; striking at the very vitals of happiness; introducing sin, sorrow, toil, pain, disease, death, and all the train of evils to which we are subject; for Paul says, "By one man's disobedience many were made sinners"—that is, Adam's sin involved his whole posterity.

3. A contentious ruler is a sinner that destroys much good; even peace and its attendant blessings. He begins a quarrel with some neighboring sovereign; a personal difference rises into a national conflict; myriads of men are called to the field of battle; and though they never saw each other, never had any personal difference, but are members of the same great family, and perhaps believe in the same religion, yet they are by these rulers worked up into a state of feeling so desperate, that they encounter each other like tigers or demons incarnate, until the ground is drenched with blood, and covered with the slain! What are the consequences? Commerce is arrested, the public coffers are emptied of their treasure, the colleges closed, the

flower of the citizens cut down, the gray-headed left to till the earth, ten thousand widows forced to seek bread for themselves, forty thousand orphans to pass through an ungodly world without a father or friend to lead them; and pestilence, plague, and camp fever, bring up the rear. And all these evils, for what? To gratify the diabolical passions of a contentious, blood-thirsty ruler, who is, to the world, a curse instead of a blessing. If it be objected, by scoffers and infidels, that Christianity has produced more war and blood-shed than any other cause, we deny the fact. It has produced none; for it is love to God and man, and its effects are "peace on earth and good will to men." How could it produce war and death? James says, "From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?" Yes; not from religion, but the want of it; for such as quarrel and fight have it not, but are the children of darkness. For the cause of war, you may look, not to Christianity, but to the depravity of man, the pride of nations, and the snares of the devil.

4. A sceptical author is a sinner that destroys much good. Verbal sayings are soon forgotten, but printed sophistry fills with poison the veins of future generations. With poison? Yes, what better than moral poison, are the sophisms of infidels; such as Volney, Hume, and Paine? Or the dogmas of Arianism and Socinianism; such as are commonly found in the productions of Unitarians, Universalists, Hixites, and Shakers? Or in the idolatrous ceremonies of Popery; as bowing to images, praying to saints, and the worship of the host in the mass? And, we ask, what better, than moral poison, are a few distinctive features in the system of Calvinism; such as, "God, from all eternity, did freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass?" Of a piece with this, are "the immutable decrees" of unconditional election and reprobation. What

mischief have these various doctrines done to the souls of men! by the printing or circulating of which, a man destroyeth much good, that might otherwise be effected.

5. A heretical preacher, especially if he be a man of ability, is a sinner that destroys much good. No member of a community is more dangerous than one whose tongue glows with misguided eloquence. The novelty of his sect, the gloss of his learning, the brilliancy of his fancy, and the bold strokes of his oratory, carry off the people, and before they are aware of the consequences, they have swallowed the sweet poison. What is it? Perhaps old fatalism, with a new dress to hide its deformities; or deism, a little refined, and christened by some religious name, to take away its reproach. Our hearers will be competent to make the application; and we pass on.

6. A deistical gentleman, who, though neither a ruler, author, nor orator, has wealth, knowledge, and influence, is a sinner that destroyeth much good. His more simple neighbors look up to him as an example, and reason thus: If religion be necessary to our well-being, why does not my more intelligent friend believe in and profess it? he is a man of information, and understands these subjects. Hence, like the ancient lawyers who took away the key of knowledge, would not enter into the kingdom themselves, and hindered such as would, he stands just between his neighbors and heaven. Now, when this man gets to hell with these poor deluded souls all around him, employed as his tormentors for ever, what an awful spectacle he will present. O that God would arrest him in his folly, and snatch him as a brand plucked out of the fire, before he is beyond the reach of mercy.

7. A distiller or dealer in ardent spirits is a sinner that destroys much good. Dissipation is a sin that has suppressed the expanding intellect of many promising young men; blasted the fondest hopes of many parents; broken

the peace of many families; wasted many fine estates; destroyed many sound constitutions; turned many once rational beings into stupid, lothsome animals; brought many amiable wives and hopeful children to beggary and shame; dug many untimely graves; and plunged many sinners into the depths of hell. But to charge all the criminality on drunkards, is unjust. If no one distilled ardent spirits, then no one could deal in them; and if no one dealt in them, wholesale or retail, no one could use them. Is it any wonder that Paul should say, "No drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of God?" Or shall we longer doubt, that every distiller, vender, and free drinker of ardent spirits, is a sinner that destroys much good? We advise all not to touch, taste, or handle the unclean thing. "At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder."

8. A dancing-master is a sinner that destroys much good. And why should people of influence patronize him? Cannot our children learn folly enough without paying a man to teach them? But ye wish them to learn politeness. Politeness from whom? Is that teacher of folly such a character as ye would have your sons and daughters to associate with for moral and mental improvement? Can he impart dignity of character to the youth of our country? However this may be, he has collected together the idle children and giddy youth of the neighborhood, and already taught them to cut as many silly capers as so many monkies. But all this is only the training, preparatory to a more brilliant display. What notice is this we see in the public prints, headed, "The cotillion party?" "Do not be alarmed," says one, "we are only going to have a decent ball." But, observe, the time lost in practicing before hand; the money expended in needless ornaments to be exhibited on the occasion; and some of it, perhaps, by men unable to pay just debts. The time arrives, and the select party

of fashionables collect. Here, if consistent with our duty, we would like to pause. But these are they who complain so much of our noisy and disorderly meetings, where we sing, pray, and rejoice occasionally; and we will proceed, and compare their moderation with our extravagance. Only behold the group! Such is the display of artificials and powdered heads, as to present somewhat the appearance of a forest of moving shrubs, covered with leaves and flowers. Their movements, however, soon dispel the delusion. The exhilarating sound of bow and fiddle seems to act as a sort of charm, which sets all in motion; they hop and skip, caper and whirl round, more like orang outangs than rational beings; and so bewitching is the influence of this fashionable vice, as to remove all thought of sleep and home, and health, and propriety, and cause them to spend whole nights, exercising themselves severely amidst clouds of dust, and the fumes of candles and heated bodies in the confined air of a close room. Comment on the moral tendency of the practice is needless. The thing speaks for itself. But as no one is supposed to act without motives, let us inquire, what is the reward of all this labor? It is made up of disappointed ambition, shoes without soles, sleepy eyes, weary frames, sore bones, empty purses, and guilty consciences. Well might Solomon say, "The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning; but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth." Such entertainments are well calculated to destroy all inclination for solid improvement of the mind, useful industry at home, the modest and blushing retirement of young people; and, above all, to dissipate every serious thought of a religious nature, and give them a rapid start in all the ways of extravagance and folly. Who can dance, and at the same time obey the precept, "Be ye sober, and watch unto prayer?" Who ever reflected with pleasure on a dying bed, upon the hours spent at a ball-room? Who, of all the

votaries of such pleasure, would be willing to exchange the habiliments used on such occasions for a shroud? Who would like to be transferred from the dancing hall to the grave; and thence to the judgment seat of Christ? Why then dare to live as you would not wish to die?

9. A disorderly professor of religion is a sinner that destroys much good. When men are openly wicked, we know how to estimate them, and their influence is confined, measurably, within the circles of those who approve of their conduct; but he that would deceive the simple-hearted, acts under a cloak of pretended piety, and being a wolf, covered with a borrowed sheep-skin, he obtains a place among the flock, where he destroys much good, before his real character is discovered. And one of the most effectual means by which he can effect this, is "tale-bearing." Not unfrequently, one tale-bearer has succeeded in producing personal differences between principal members of flourishing societies, which have terminated in their entire destruction. No wonder, therefore, that James said, "Behold, how great matter a little fire kindleth! the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: * * * and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell." People engaged in whispering, backbiting, and tale-bearing, may have crept into the Church, and so managed as not to have been yet expelled; but the devil has a bill of sale of them, "they have sold themselves for naught" unto him, and he now employs them to do his meanest drudgery; and in this way one sinner destroys much good, by disturbing the peace of societies and families, and throwing stumbling blocks in the way of individuals.

10. Every finally impenitent sinner destroys much good, even one soul. And who can estimate the value of a soul immortal?—a soul that never can cease to exist, neither become unconscious: a soul whose redemption cost the tears, and sweat, and blood, and life of the Son of God:

a soul that must dwell in endless bliss, or endless woe: a soul that, in a few more years at most, will mingle with flaming seraphs around the throne of God, or howl with fallen spirits that rattle their chains in devouring fire for ever and ever.

We conclude our remarks on this subject with a few plain inferences; and,

1. If such are the actions of men, what shall we think of their hearts? If such are the streams of iniquity that men's lives exhibit, what must be the fountains from which they flow? Let Inspiration answer: "Their inward part is very wickedness." "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" And "out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh." And shall any one ever dream of getting to heaven in this state? Vain is the thought. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

2. All the pious, and especially all ministers, parents, and teachers, should exert themselves to alarm sinners of their danger, that they may "flee the wrath to come," while it is yet to come. This is the reason why we deal so plainly with the people, believing it better to be charged with being too plain here, than to be charged at the judgment seat of Christ with not being plain enough. May our God help us to trouble the consciences of sinners with plain truth, until they turn to him and live!

3. We should be stimulated with the hope of success; for as one sinner destroyeth much good, so may one Christian be the means of destroying much evil. "No man liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself." Our examples necessarily influence others, either to good or evil. Let us, therefore, dear brethren, so live as to preach Christ daily by our conduct and conversation, then shall we have that holiness which will make us both useful and happy; and when the Lord of the vineyard shall call home

the laborers to receive their hire, may we return to him rejoicing, and bringing our sheaves with us. The Lord add his blessing, and to him be all the glory. Amen.

SERMON XXI.

THE FAITHFUL PREACHER.

"And many other things in his exhortation preached he unto the people," Luke iii, 18.

The best institution ever discovered for improving the hearts and lives of men, is preaching; especially when "the ministry of the word" is in the hands of men, whose motto is truth and holiness. John the Baptist is an example of faithfulness as a preacher. We shall say a few things respecting him, as such, and speak,

I. Of his character.

II. His preaching.

III. Draw a few inferences.

I. The account of John the Baptist, by the ancient prophets, is full and interesting. Isaiah spoke of "the voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a high way for our God." The same prophecy was delivered by Malachi afterwards. Here is an allusion to an ancient military custom, of sending forward pioneers to clear the road for the army; so John is spoken of as one employed to go before the Messiah, and prepare the minds of the people to receive him and his Gospel. That the prophecy refers to John, is certain, because he quotes it, and makes the application thereof to himself, saying, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness," &c.

The circumstances of his birth indicated his future greatness. There was a priest, whose name was Zacharias, and his wife's name was Elizabeth, "and they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments

and ordinances of the Lord blameless;" but they were old and childless. And while Zacharias was in the temple burning incense, he saw Gabriel standing near the altar, who informed him his prayer was heard, his wife should bear him a son, and his name should be John. Zacharias asked for a sign of the fulfillment of this promise, which implied unbelief; and Gabriel, therefore, gave him a strong one: "Thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season." And so he was. On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, when a dispute arose about his name between his mother and the priests, which was referred to his father, who, being furnished with a table, wrote, "His name is John;" and then his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed immediately. As for the balance of his name, it is taken entirely from his office. John the Baptist means John the baptizer; and he was so called because of the vast numbers whom he baptized. Any one who administers that ordinance is a Baptist, according to the primary meaning of the term Baptist; but with the same propriety that we can call a woman a Baptist, we might call her a pope. Strange things have come to pass in these latter days. His early life was spent in sobriety and retirement; for the angel said, "He shall drink neither wine nor strong drink." Would it not be well, if those who profess to have derived their name and distinguishing Church ordinance from him, would more generally imitate him in point of temperance? And the apostle says, he "was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel;" that is, retired from all the dissipating examples of the world, he lived a life of solitude, in the wilderness, until he entered on the public duties of his office as a messenger of heaven. Would not this be thought a strange theological college, in which to educate "competent ministers" in these days?

"His meat was locusts and wild honey." By consulting the law of Moses, Leviticus xi, 22, you may see that these locusts are among the animals which were clean to the Jews; and, consequently, that John, as a Jewish priest, acted perfectly in character, when he ate them. These, and wild honey, which he gathered in the woods, made up his variety. The real wants of human nature are comparatively few, but imaginary ones have no bounds.

He "had his raiment of camels' hair"—a kind of canvass or very coarse cloth manufactured out of the hair of camels. Of this cloth, no doubt, was made his over garment, which was fastened round him with "a leathern girdle," or belt. Suppose a preacher of the Gospel should visit our towns and cities now in this kind of habiliment, what would be the common opinion entertained of his ability and standing? Yet such was the gown worn by a priest, whom God sent to the most populous cities of Judea, to convert the scribes, elders of the people, and doctors of the law, as well as the common ranks of society. Let the fashionable minister think of this; and while it sheds reproach upon his appearance, may it strike conviction to his heart.

The testimony which Christ bore of him, is truly honorable. To the multitudes, many of whom perhaps had attended John's ministry, he said, "What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind?" Or a mere matter of vain curiosity? "But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment?" If so, ye were disappointed; for, "Behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses;" but John is from the desert. "But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet:" an extraordinary messenger, even the forerunner of the Son of God. "Verily, I say unto you, Among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of

heaven, is greater than he." From this we learn two things: that as John was the last, so he was among the greatest of all under the prophetic dispensation; and yet that the smallest child of grace in the Gospel dispensation is greater than he, has light that John never saw, and comforts he never felt, arising from the witness of the Spirit.

II. His preaching.

His doctrine was "the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins;" or a baptism which showed to them who received it the necessity of repentance, and brought them under promise to repent, that their sins might be pardoned. This was the theme of his message. His manner was to give to each one his portion plainly. To the multitude, who came to be baptized of him, he said, "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee the wrath to come?" Ye serpentine race, of a serpentine brood, by whose warning have ye been convinced of your guilt and danger? "Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father," as though that would save you; "for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham;" or of these sinners, whose hearts are as cold and hard as rocks, to raise up the spiritual seed of Abraham. The covetous came and said unto him, "What shall we do?" Hear his answer. "He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise." "Then came also publicans," Roman officers, who gathered public dues, and on account of their fraudulent practices, were hateful to a proverb, "to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do? And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you," cease to defraud, and become honest men. "The soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do?" And knowing that violence, revenge, and discontent were their besetting

sins, he said, "Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages." The most remarkable instance of his faithfulness was the reproof he gave king Herod. The singularity of John's appearance, the novelty of his doctrines, and the authority with which he delivered them, produced general excitement. His conquests were pushed near the palace itself. The royal family must needs come out and hear him, and recognizing his majesty, he said to him, respecting an unlawful connection he sustained with Philip's wife, "It is not lawful for thee to have her." This plain, pointed reproof must have troubled the king's conscience.

What were the effects of such preaching? We may naturally suppose, that with some of his hearers the preacher lost his good name; for who, that opposes the works of Satan, does not, with at least a part of the people? He also lost his liberty. Herod, being offended, cast him into prison. To this kind of persecution we are not now subject in this land of freedom. But it has not been very long since the ministers of our Church, both in Europe and America, were honored with showers of stones, eggs, and brickbats while in the pulpit; and, thence, with a berth in the common prison for preaching the truth. Now, though the hearts of opposers are no better, their works are restrained; and all they can do is to stand at a distance, and speak great swelling words of opposition, not knowing what they say, nor whereof they affirm; and these do not even reach our feelings, but fall harmless at our feet. Finally, John lost his life. The circumstances were briefly these: A ball had been appointed for the entertainment of Herod and his friends, at which the daughter of Herodias danced elegantly, and pleased him well, to whom he rashly promised any thing she would ask, to the half of his kingdom. What an impious and trifling ruler he must have been, to be thus delighted with the flirtations of a frisky girl. And the maid

being privately instructed of her prostituted mother, who had taken offense at the plain, honest preacher, said, "Give me here the head of John the Baptist in a charger," or waiter. It was done; he gave it to the damsel, and she gave it to her mother. What a present to exhibit in a ball-room—"the bloody head of the murdered ambassador of the Son of God!" But such were the results of "a decent ball" eighteen hundred years ago; and what good ever came of a ball before or since? It is evil, and only evil.

But these were not the only effects of John's preaching. If infamy, imprisonment, and martyrdom had been the only effects, his example would be less encouraging; but he persuaded multiplied thousands to embrace his holy doctrines, and practice them; and these, though not saved just as we are under the Gospel, were saved according to the light of John's day, which was superior to the Jews' religion, and inferior to Christianity. And so of all faithful preachers, though some get offended and persecute, while we deal faithfully with the people, yet others will be saved, and brought to the knowledge of the truth.

III. A few inferences from the whole subject.

No particular mode of preaching is essential. John preached in his exhortation, or publicly declared the will of God to the people, while he earnestly persuaded them to turn from sin, by repentance, to God. We know it is customary now to introduce much formality into the pulpit, usually some selected sentence, part of a sentence, or a paragraph is first read for a text, and then divided and subdivided with a great deal of form and system; and in filling this plan, to use many technical terms, logical distinctions, rhetorical flourishes, and so on; and men are so much the creatures of habit, that after first adopting the plan of preaching from a text, it comes more naturally to them with one, than otherwise; and they keep up the practice generally, though not always, merely because they speak with

more liberty on this plan—not that it is by any means essential to preaching, or even to good preaching, to take a text. "Ezra, the scribe," who was the first preacher we read of, "stood upon a pulpit of wood, which they made for the purpose;" but his preaching consisted in reading the book of the law of God distinctly, giving the sense thereof, and causing the people to understand the reading; which must have been a kind of plain, simple lecture. Christ and his apostles preached, but, as far as we have any proof, not after our manner, of taking a text and dividing it: wherefore we suppose it to be a matter of indifference. If a man can preach better by taking a text, let him do it; if not, let him dispense with the custom.

Our next inference is, that when God has a work to be done, he is not at a loss for instruments to carry it on; for the hearts of all men are in his hands. With ease he raises a Moses to deliver Israel, Solomon to rule them, and the prophets to teach them; John to fill the intermediate space between the prophets and Christ; the apostles to plant the Gospel Church; and the Reformers to revive it after a long and general declension; and the Methodists to "spread Scripture holiness over these lands" during the past and present centuries.

Finally, we infer, that the work will have opposition, but not defeat. The conflict between light and darkness, holiness and sin, truth and falsehood, will be severe. The faithful preacher, who carries on the warfare, need expect no favors from the world, or the votaries of any of the various systems of false doctrines; but taking the sword of the Spirit, and trusting in the strong arm of Christ, he will cut his passage through all the ranks of the enemy. The Head of the Church will still say to him, "Lo, I am with you;" and when the war is over, he will return laden with spoil taken from the enemy of souls: then he will "return rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." Such

a reward is well worth a life of toil and danger. Then let us gird ourselves with truth, be sober, and hope to the end. May the Lord give us seals to our ministry, souls for our hire, and save us and all the people, now and ever. Amen.

SERMON XXII.

THE HOLY SABBATH.

"And he said unto them, That the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath," Luke vi, 5.

"Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work," is one of the plainest commands in the Bible, and one of general application, not being restricted to any particular class of people. It does not say, or mean, that the poor man or the servant shall labor, and the rich man rest, but embraces the whole. Whoever does not labor or follow some useful employment, which contributes to the good of the whole, is a burden to society; and unless he be excused by age, infirmity, or affliction, violates the command under consideration, and is of course a sinner against God and man; and his having an income by inheritance or otherwise to support him without labor, will be no excuse at the day of judgment for neglecting his duty, because if he does not need the proceeds of his labor, others do, and God requires it of him.

It is, however, due to the subject, and to ourselves, to say, it is not necessary in order to obey this command, that all should pursue one employment. The well-being of society requires a great variety of occupations. One labors in the domestic circle of household business, and another in the field; the mechanic toils in the shop, and the merchant in his counting-room; the physician in the chamber of affliction, and the statesman in the council of the nation; the scholar in his study, and the minister in his pulpit, &c. No matter what our calling may be, if it is only lawful and

useful, we obey the command to labor as much as if we plied with the axe or mall.

This commandment, like all others, which God imposes on man, is founded in wisdom and goodness; obedience to it, will not only secure food and raiment, but promote virtue and good health. While the indolent votaries of pleasure and dissipation are liable to temptation and disease, the industrious form good habits, by affording the mind useful employment, and enjoy good health from bodily exercise. Moreover, while idleness and gluttony produce restlessness of body and mind, the laboring man enjoys refreshing sleep and sweet contentment. But we have not time to pursue this subject any further on this occasion.

After we have labored six days, then comes the weekly rest. "It is the Sabbath of the Lord, in it thou shalt not do any work." To labor and to rest, each in its season, are duties imposed by the same supreme authority. How prone are men to extremes. Some are so fond of rest, they must needs solace themselves with it seven days in a week; while others, not content with the gain of six days' labor, will continue their temporal business on the Sabbath. But they who refuse to work six days in the week, and they who work on the Sabbath, are alike transgressors of God's law, and liable to its fearful penalties. Henceforth, on this occasion, our remarks will have reference only to the Sabbath; and we propose to notice,

I. The obligation to keep the Sabbath.

II. The manner of keeping the Sabbath.

I. For an account of the origin and nature of the institution of the Sabbath, we refer to the history of the creation in the book of Genesis, where Moses speaks on this wise: "And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from

all his work which God created and made." Here the Sabbath, or day of rest, is introduced to the Bible reader as the first and oldest religious institution which God ever gave to man, and is enforced by the example of the Almighty himself.

That this institution was observed by the Israelites before the two tables of the law were given, appears from several places in the Bible, especially the 16th chapter of Exodus, where we have a most interesting account of God's supplying them with manna, and the injunction to desist from gathering it on the Sabbath. Every morning they found it fresh in abundance, except on the Sabbath; and to provide for that, they were allowed to gather a double portion the previous day. Part of this account is as follows: "Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the Sabbath, in it there shall be none. And it came to pass, that there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none. And the Lord said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws? See, for that the Lord hath given you the Sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days: abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day. So the people rested on the seventh day." In this place, there is not only a record of the fact that there was a Sabbath, but a plain command to observe it strictly, enforced under proper penalties. The circumstance which the Lord ordained, in order to enforce the moral principle of the institution of the Sabbath, was remarkable; one which could scarcely fail to be effectual after it was fully understood. The double portion of manna gathered the day before the Sabbath remained sweet and sound two days; but if on any other day they gathered more than one day's provision, it bred worms, and became offensive before the next day. Again, the Israelites were required to have

respect to the Sabbath, not only in procuring, but also in preparing their provisions, so as to keep it holy; hence, this injunction, "To-morrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord: bake that which ye will bake to-day, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over, lay up for you to be kept until the morning." To those who are in the habit of cooking and feasting themselves with warm dinners on the Lord's day, we would say, "Go ye and do likewise."

In giving the law at Sinai, the Lord renewed and enlarged the obligation to keep holy the Sabbath; of which law we cannot now speak particularly. Suffice it to say, that from thence forward, it is frequently mentioned by the sacred writers, who speak of it as an important duty, involving weighty and powerful motives for its strict observance. Isaiah saith, "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable; and shalt honor him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words; then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

But is the observance of the Sabbath now obligatory? Were we not well persuaded of this fact, we should think the subject of but little importance to us, and therefore would let it rest. Some of our reasons for concluding this obligation of Sabbath keeping to be still in force are these: It is a part of the moral law, which is of perpetual obligation. Hence, Christ said, "I am not come to destroy the law, but to fulfill." What law did he not destroy? Certainly not the ceremonial law; for this, Paul says, he "abolished in his flesh;" but the moral law he destroyed not. On the contrary, he magnified and made it honorable,

by a holy life and a sacrificial death. And though it is now incorporated into the system of the Gospel, so that "we are not without law to God, but under the law to Christ," the moral principle thereof remains entire; of course the obligation to keep the Sabbath, contained in the fourth commandment, is in full force. But suppose, for the sake of argument, that the moral law had been done away by Christ, it would not follow that the institution of the Sabbath, which existed long before the Ten Commandments were given, was destroyed. Again, the Sabbath was often mentioned by Christ and his apostles as existing in their day, and well understood by all. Even in connection with our subject, our Savior speaks of a first Sabbath, and a second Sabbath after the first, when his hungry disciples were accused of Sabbath-breaking for eating green corn in the field, as they passed through, he informed their accusers that he was Lord of the Sabbath. On the Sabbath he did many of his miracles, such as healing the palsied, and restoring sight to the blind; and how could these things be, if there was no Sabbath in his day? "But he gives no express commandment to keep it," says one; nor was it necessary, respecting an institution of long standing, which was well understood among the people. "But," it is said, "the Sabbath was a type, and the type can exist only until the thing typified is brought to light." To this we have no objection; for the object typified by the weekly Sabbath, is that rest which remains for the people of God in heaven; and, of course, the Sabbath must remain in full force until the final consummation of all earthly things; yea until it is lost in the Sabbath that never ends. "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his."

It is, however, changed from the seventh to the first day of the week, in commemoration of the resurrection of

Christ, who, according to the Jewish calculation, died on Saturday and rose on Monday, but according to the Christian computation from thence forward, he died on Friday and rose on Sunday. This change does not affect the moral principle of the Sabbath, which consists not so much in keeping the seventh, first, or middle day of the week, as in employing a certain proportion of our time in the service of God. And certainly no one will dispute that Christ who is Lord of the Sabbath, had a right to make such a change. What are the proofs of this change? First, the disciples from this time forward set apart the first day of the week for their various religious meetings. Thus, on the first day of the week, they came together to break bread, or celebrate the Lord's supper. On the first day of the week, they made collections for the poor brethren; and John, during his state of exile, was still mindful of his Master's institution, for he "was in the Spirit on the Lord's day;" and what was the Lord's day but the day of his resurrection, and the same day in which John had been accustomed to meet with his brethren for religious worship? But the strongest proof that the first day of the week is now "the Sabbath of the Lord," is the example of inspired men. If the apostles had acted only upon their own authority, it would be discretionary with us to imitate them, or refuse to do so, as we choose; but being inspired, and consequently as teachers of religion infallible, the customs which they introduced into the Church, are clothed with the authority of divine commands, and therefore must not be trifled with by any. The authority for keeping the first day of the week as the Christian Sabbath, comes not from the tradition of the fathers, nor the decrees of human councils, but from inspired apostles; and, of course, from God who inspired them. And, hence, Paul informed the Gentile converts at Colosse, that the Jewish converts had no right to judge them in respect "of Sabbath days"—that

is, to condemn them for not keeping the Jewish Sabbaths. But how strange it is, that any one should ever think of quoting this text to disprove the validity of the Christian Sabbath! As well might he refer to the 1st verse of Genesis to prove atheism. We will now notice,

II. The manner of keeping the Sabbath.

The commandment begins with, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." The word remember is intended to secure the necessary preparations before hand, that we may have no occasion to work when the day comes. "Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: but the seventh (now first) day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates." This commandment is exceedingly broad. Whoever works on the Sabbath himself, or suffers his children for him, or for themselves, to work; or allows his servants to labor, in doors or out; or his animals to be employed to carry on any temporal business; or the stranger that sojourns with him for a season, to work on his premises, is a Sabbath-breaker.

But are there no exceptions to this rule? Yes; works of necessity, such as cannot be done before, and cannot be put off until after, may be done on the Sabbath. We must eat on the Sabbath, but our food may, and should be prepared before hand; we must kindle our fires, but the wood should be cut previously; we must dress, but our garments should be washed, ironed, and made ready for use before Sabbath; we must feed and water our animals, but not work them; we may pull the sheep out of the mire, but may not mark the lambs; and though we "loose the ox and lead him to the watering," we may not hunt strays, or train young horses or cattle to lead, ride, or work on the Sabbath. Works of humanity are also excepted. Thus

we may visit and nurse the sick, bury the dead, and impart spiritual instruction on the Sabbath day. Preaching the Gospel to save souls is a work of charity; and, if need be, we may employ our animals in going to and from places of religious worship on the Lord's day; all of which is implied in the commandment which requires preachers to "go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature," and the one which requires the people to "forsake not the assembling of themselves together."

To keep holy the Sabbath day, is not only to abstain from all temporal business thereon, but to spend it in God's service, to employ the day, not a part thereof, in spiritual improvement, by reading the Bible and other religious books, secret prayer, holy meditation, attending places of religious worship, and so on, that we may make "a Sabbath day's journey" in the way to heaven. This, and this only, is keeping the Sabbath.

But if we have not mistaken the subject, how will many, alas, too many, answer for the abuse thereof? Some of whom employ their Sabbaths in idle or fashionable visits, either made or received; others in reading political papers, and talking on politics; some in expeditions of gallantry, or other kinds of pleasure, such as jaunts from town to country, or country to town; others in reveling and dissipation at public houses; some in journeying upon temporal business; others in posting up their books; one party of children is seen at swings, mill-ponds, or playing in the fields or streets; and another acting the part of vermin, by hunting nuts or fruits; in the domestic circle, we see servants cooking, and men shaving; in social circles, we see people employed on the Lord's day in routes and voyages, parties of popular amusement, and vain carousals; in circles of business, we see men employed to make money on the Sabbath, by opening shops and groceries, running steamboats and canal boats, hacks and stages, carrying on

glass works, salt works, sugar works, and distilleries! The smoke from these furnaces on the Sabbath day, should remind them of the smoke of their torment, which will ascend for ever, unless they repent, and that speedily. These are but a few of the many ways which men have to break the Sabbath.

Their excuses for these offenses are almost as various as the offenses themselves. One pleads poverty; another haste; a third neglects his business on Saturday, and pleads necessity for doing it on Sunday; a fourth pleads public authority—that is, of man against the authority of God. Some, more strangely than all the others, plead right, saying, "Why, Sunday is our own day, and we may use it as we please!" Never was there a grosser mistake; it is emphatically called the Lord's day, and not ours. Suppose you see a man in abject poverty, and having seven dollars, give him six of them, whereupon he tries to rob you of the other, would you take it kindly? But after God has given to men six days, in which he allows them to attend to their own business, they would take the seventh also. Well may we tremble, when we recollect there is a day coming when Jehovah will assert and maintain his right. A few words of improvement, and we shall be done.

The advantages of the Sabbath, temporally, are of great importance. Rest to the laboring man is sweet, whether it be labor of body or mind; and is it not equally so to the beasts? Their bones are not made of iron, nor their flesh of brass. Both man and beast will last longer, and do better, by resting one day in a week, which can be well afforded; for experience proves that the balance of our time is sufficient to make an ample support.

The importance of the Sabbath, spiritually and morally considered, is still greater. Perhaps nineteen-twentieths of all the religious operations of our world, are carried on upon the Sabbath. And we think we risk nothing, when

we say, that the Sabbath is essential to the existence of Christianity. Take away the Sabbath, and, without the miraculous interposition of God, revealed religion would die a natural death. Do you ask for the proof? Look at all of our attempts to collect the people on other days at places of worship, and you have incontestable evidence at hand. Take away the Sabbath, and you destroy Christianity; and, of course, the foundation of all well regulated, civil governments is gone. If you would see the advantages of the Christian Sabbath, compare the state of society among heathens with the state of society here, and you will have them plain before you. The French, to do away the Sabbath, made a new division of time, allowing the tenth day to be employed, not as a rest, but a holyday; rightly judging that if they could break down the Sabbath, they would banish religion out of the land. All allegiance to God was renounced, and a common prostitute was set up in the temple of religion, and worshiped as the goddess of reason; but the people rebelled, and went back to their Sabbath, and their religion, such as it was. May God save all other nations from a repetition of such folly and blasphemy.

Disregarding the Sabbath among professed Christians hinders the work of grace, because their examples strengthen the hands of others in a course of impiety, and defaces the image of Christ in their own souls. Indeed, we esteem no man religious, in any important sense of the word, who does not keep holy the Sabbath day; because we know from experience, that it acts with the force of a moral principle on the heart, affording peace of mind to the obedient, and condemnation to the disobedient.

Lastly, profaning the Sabbath brings down the judgments of God upon the wicked. Thus Nehemiah said, "Yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the Sabbath." But if so in that age, how much more now, when "knowl-

edge is increased." One thing very worthy of remark is, that more awful judgments fall on the wicked upon the Sabbath, than any other day in the week. Possibly all have not observed this, but we have. And we challenge any man in the assembly to make the examination; and if there are not more truant boys drowned, parties of pleasure lost, drunkards frozen to death, and travelers crippled by horses and carriages, and other calamities sent on the wicked, on the Sabbath, than any other day, we promise to make our acknowledgments as public as we have made our assertion. What are these things for, but to show that God will have his day regarded; that it shall not be trampled on with impunity. May this Sabbath be a day of rest to our souls and bodies; and we finally be brought to enjoy the Sabbath that never ends! And to the Lord of the Sabbath shall be all the glory. Amen.

SERMON XXIII.

THE GLORY OF THE CHURCH.

"The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts," Haggai ii, 9.

SHORTLY after the Jews returned from Babylon, they desired to rebuild the temple, which had been destroyed; and commenced, but being greatly weakened in their numbers and wealth, they were obliged to make the plan of it far inferior to the former edifice; and when the old men compared it with the first they had seen, they wept, and all got discouraged, and suspended their labor. However, in a few years, the Lord sent his prophet to encourage them to resume their work, saying, "Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory?" There were perhaps a few old men living who had seen it, though it had been in ruins sixty-six years. "And how do you see it now? is

it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing? Yet now be strong * * * all ye people of the land and work: for I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts. * * * Fear ye not, * * * I will shake all nations," with political revolutions; "and the desire of all nations (Christ) shall come: and I will fill this house with glory," with the glorious presence of the Son of God, who, about five hundred years hence shall teach therein daily, and heal many; and on this account, "the glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts." And so it was; for John says, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." Such was the primary meaning of this Scripture, which we use as a text on this occasion.

The Church is figuratively called a house. Micah says, "In the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains; * * * and people shall flow unto it." And Paul says, "Christ as a Son over his own house, (is faithful,) whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence, and the rejoicing of the hope, firm unto the end." These, and scores of other texts like them, will justify us in taking the figurative view of the house under consideration. We shall speak,

I. Of the former house, or Jewish Church.

II. The latter house, or Christian Church.

III. Show wherein the latter house exceeds the former house in glory.

I. It is now a long time since God called Abraham and his family to be the beginning of his chosen people, or visible Church. And what mighty changes of fortune they have been the subjects of; yet Jehovah has wonderfully watched over and preserved them. Driven by famine from Canaan, he found them a retreat in the fat of the land of

Goshen. Here they were afterwards oppressed out of measure; but the God of Israel sent them deliverance, and orders to return to their own country, from which they had been absent four hundred years; during which time they increased from three-score and ten to more than six hundred thousand men, besides women and children. The Lord accompanied them on a journey of forty years through a waste, howling wilderness, providing for them by miraculous means. When they thirsted, he opened the rock and caused water to run like rivers in dry places; when they hungered, he sent them manna from heaven, and quails to the full; he gave them a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night; dried up seas and rivers before them; and finally brought them to the promised inheritance, which he divided amongst them, driving out their enemies before them, and gave them cities which they had not built, and vineyards which they had not planted.

Here they built a house for God, called the temple of Solomon. King David first undertook it, saying to Nathan the prophet, "See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth in curtains. And Nathan said to the king, Go, do all that is in thine heart: for the Lord is with thee." Howbeit, David had been a man of blood, and God transferred the honor of this undertaking to his son Solomon, who completed it in eight years, and dedicated it in a most solemn manner in the year of the world 3001. Perhaps this temple was the most magnificent edifice of which we have any account in the history of either ancient or modern times. The ground-plot on which it was built was a square, each side of which was six hundred cubits. It was laid off into three general apartments; the outer court, or court of the Gentiles, which is supposed to represent the state of the world under this dispensation; the court of Israel, typical of the Church militant; and the most holy place, typical of heaven.

These were encircled by splendid galleries, supported by divers rows of pillars, and the whole ornamented with festoons, and decorated with silver and gold, ivory and marble of various colors. Here the Jews, for hundreds of years, offered their sacrifices, which were, however, only ceremonial, and intended to strengthen their faith in the grand atoning sacrifice of their promised Messiah. We will now notice,

II. The latter house, or Christian Church.

It is built upon the foundation of the prophets and apostles, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone. Before it was fairly commenced, John the Baptist came as a pioneer, proclaiming, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." Presently, Christ was dedicated to the office of the High Priest of our profession, and began to preach his own everlasting Gospel, to the astonishment of congregated thousands. Next, he ordained twelve apostles; that is, persons chosen and sent to preach and to heal all manner of diseases. These did wonders; but the harvest being great, and the laborers few, he employed seventy more and sent them out, all over Judea, two and two together, as we go on our circuits. They had a glorious time; for when they returned, they came with joy, saying, "Lord, even the devils are subject to us through thy name. And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." Christ, having established his Messiahship by many infallible signs and wonders, began to explain to his disciples how he must suffer, and die, and rise again; all of which took place, attended with an assemblage of most extraordinary circumstances. And though it was a season of sore conflict to the infant Church, yet thereby was laid the foundation of her future glory and final triumph.

After his resurrection, Christ renewed the commission

of his ministers, and greatly enlarged the field of their labors, saying, "All power is given to me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Blessed be his name, the experience of eighteen hundred years proves him faithful to his promise. But before they entered on their great work, they were instructed to tarry at Jerusalem certain days, until they should be indued with power from on high. And so they did, and were not disappointed; for at the day of Pentecost, while they were assembled, and all praying with one accord, suddenly the Holy Ghost came on them, attended with a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and filled all the house with glory, lighting down like flames of fire on their heads, and so warmed their hearts, and loosed their tongues, that they became linguists without lexicons, and began immediately to preach Jesus and the resurrection in divers languages.

Nor did they spend their strength for naught. In one day the infant Church increased from a hundred and twenty to thirty-one hundred and twenty, and shortly afterward to five thousand. The holy flame of Gospel reformation spread far and wide, amongst Jews and Gentiles, but not without opposition; many, very many, set themselves against the work of God, but could not overthrow it. And when the civil arm was leveled against them so heavily as to disperse the disciples, it only tended to the furtherance of the Gospel; for "they went everywhere preaching the word;" and in about fifty years, it is thought, the Gospel was heard in the bounds of every considerable kingdom then on earth.

This great work, however, was followed by a general declension. While the disciples were faithful, and simple-

hearted, keeping up a marked difference between them and the world, and glorying only in the cross, the work went on with great success, bearing down every opposition. But when they grew to be a great people, and became more popular, the spirit of compromise with the world got in amongst them, the moral discipline of the Church was lowered, the rich and fashionable more frequently joined them, bringing their worldly-mindedness, and improper influence, with them; also statesmen and politicians would naturally covet favor with the Church, to forward their own designs; until the Church, from being poor, despised, and persecuted, began to walk in golden slippers, raise her glittering spires, control fleets and armies; and in a word, the spirit of the world was measurably substituted for the Spirit of Christ, and "Ichabod," the glory has departed from Israel, was written on the door of the temple. Such, we learn from Church history, was the general state of religion a few centuries after Christ; which continued for many hundred years forward, forming what are called the dark ages of the Church; during which anti-christ arose and spread a deadly influence over Zion. However, in the midst of all, God never left himself entirely without witnesses; there were always a faithful few, more or less, who, amidst darkness, persecution, and death, shone as lights in the world, and the gates of hell did not prevail against them.

After the many changes and conflicts of the Church referred to, light began to dawn from afar. Wickliffe arose as the morning star of the Reformation. Luther soon followed with a mighty increase of light and strength, possessed of every needful qualification for such a bold and important enterprise. Equally unmoved by the bulls of popes, and the decrees of councils, he proceeded amidst gathering storms, assembled mobs, opening dungeons, and crackling flames, to proclaim a present, full, and free salvation,

through simple faith in Jesus Christ. Others were presently seen to take the field, affording a variety of gifts and talents in the great work. Zuinglius worked in Switzerland, while Luther worked in Saxony; and both were joined by others. Some writer says, "Melancthon was like a gliding stream; Knox came down like a thunder-storm; and Calvin was like a settled day's rain." And though they had painful divisions within, and sore oppositions without, the work so triumphed, that in about fifty years they broke the shackles of popish tyranny from half of Christendom. And so long as the cause of Christ was dependent only on its own resources it flourished; but when Protestantism became popular, and was established by the civil authority, so as to amalgamate the Church and state, then she retained the form, but lost the power of godliness. So true was Christ when he said, "My kingdom is not of this world." And perhaps this unfortunate decline of Protestantism was partly the cause of Luther's opinion, that no revival of religion could continue more than one generation. But we shall presently see how much he was mistaken.

A little more than a century ago, a second and improved edition of this reformation commenced in Oxford, England. At that time the state of religion was exceedingly dull throughout the kingdoms of Europe. Mr. Hawies, in his Church history, informs us, that the Church ministers were still reading their cold, moral lectures; the Presbyterians for the most part had gone over to the Arians; the Quakers still held their silent meetings; and the Baptists had scarcely a name to live. Such was the general state of things when God poured his Spirit upon a few striplings, the Wesleys, Whitefield, and others, and thrust them out to raise up a holy people. These met with stern opposition, but not defeat. Frequently, their zeal for Christ, and success in his work, caused them to be turned out of the

churches. This, however, only tended to a more rapid increase of the glorious work; for they resorted to fields, markets, and commons, where multiplied hundreds and thousands flocked to hear the word of life. The revival, which commenced then, has been going on ever since. More than seventy years ago, it crossed the Atlantic and rekindled in America. At first the other denominations were going with one consent to drive us as heretics from the walls of Zion by force; but the more our doctrine was opposed, the more it was preached, and the better it was understood; and the better it was understood, the more generally it was believed and embraced. The ground of attack was then changed, and seeing they could not drive us, they came and wanted to help us, crying, "Peace, peace, union, union;" but we still minded our own business, believing that this was opposition in disguise, as it turned out to be: hence, the frequent attacks made on Methodism, east, west, north and south, by our opponents. "But none of these things move us." In the midst of all, see what God hath wrought. Hundreds of thousands of Methodists have died in the faith of Christ, and gone to heaven. Hundreds of thousands more are on their journey home. And beside this, it is believed they have been the means, under God, of giving a new and general impulse to all Christendom. Hence the revolutions in the religious world in doctrines, experience, and practice. Hence, also, the many associations for pious and benevolent purposes, by which the Gospel is rapidly spreading throughout the world. There are many, very many, great and glorious revivals of religion in the different branches of Christ's Church, wherein we do rejoice, and will rejoice; for as Bishop M'Kendree said, "God knows, and the people know, and we know where the work first commenced." Here then is a revival, which has lasted more than one hundred years; and what is to hinder it from going on

until the world is converted? Nothing but ourselves. If ever we fall as a people, generally, we shall fall under our own weight; opposition from without cannot hurt us, otherwise we should have been devoured long since. If Methodists will attend strictly to their doctrines, experience, and discipline and usages, according to the original system received from their fathers, so as to maintain a pure ministry, and a holy membership, they have nothing to fear. God will continue with them, and who can successfully oppose? We hasten to notice,

III. Wherein this latter house exceeds the former house in glory.

First, in her sacrifices. The sacrifices of the Jewish Church were only ceremonial; they could not take away sins, else would the comers thereunto have been made perfect; but were a shadow of good things to come. Often did holy women bring their offerings of flour, and oil, and wine; while priests carried baskets of green corn with one hand, and led a ram by the horn with the other, or took a red heifer for a sin-offering without the camp. But what were all these compared with the sacrifice of Christ, when he offered his soul and body as a living sacrifice upon the flaming altar of his divinity, for all Jews and all Gentiles!

Again, in her ministry. Amongst the Jews, the priests, who attended much to the temple service, had but little to do with the instruction of the people. But there was another class of men called seers or prophets, who taught them occasionally; yet their discourses were either prophetic or mostly explanatory of dreams and visions, referring to things future, addressed to kings and other great persons, and came to the common people remotely. Not so the ministry of the Gospel. We are sent to offer all men, not a Messiah to come, but an all-sufficient Savior, who died for their sins, rose for their justification, and

now ever liveth to make intercession for them. May this come to our ears and hearts to-day like good news from a far country!

The latter house exceeds the former also in her divine influence. There was certainly some divine influence in the Jewish religion; but Christianity brings us the dispensation of the Spirit, and the day of God's power. In all cases where there is a faithful exhibition of Gospel truth, God attends it with more or less power to all who receive it. Not that it uniformly produces conversions; for conversion is but one part of the great work of grace, which God is carrying on in the souls of men; but it operates on the hearers according to their different states of mind, in proportion as they receive the message: sometimes awakening, then converting, and then sanctifying them. Hence, whether the Lord employs us as the instruments of alarming sinners, or bringing them to Christ, or feeding and strengthening his sheep, we are in our proper place, and ought to be content.

Once more, the latter house is greater than the former house in extent. At first the Jewish Church was composed of one family, afterward of twelve tribes, and at best was confined to Judea; but the Christian Church has for the field of her labors the whole earth. Soon after her organization, her enemies exclaimed, "They have filled Jerusalem with their doctrines." Ah, true, but this was only the beginning of the work. The kingdoms of Europe, and states of America, are well nigh filled with the joyful sound. The icy regions of the north, and burning plains of Africa, have heard the heavenly echo. It has been remarked, that one army of missionaries traveling eastward, and another westward, will soon meet in the islands of the Pacific Ocean, and encircle our globe with the girdle of Gospel truth. A few more struggles, and the glorious millenium will shine with full splendor on our once benighted

world. Heathen temples will all go to the moles and bats; Turks will abandon their delusive dreams; Popery will utter her expiring groan; the lost tribes will gather to their long neglected Messiah, with the fullness of the Gentiles; and the little stone cut out of the mountain without hands, will become a great mountain itself, and fill the whole world with glory.

In conclusion, we would observe, that in all ages of the Church, there have been some visible displays of God's glory; but much more at sometimes than others. Jacob saw a ladder, which reached from earth to heaven, on which angels ascended and descended, and above stood the God of his fathers. The prophets saw great sights. Thus, Moses perceived a flame of fire in a bush, and the bush was not consumed. Afterward called of God, he took Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and seventy elders, and went upon a mountain, and they saw the God of Israel, and under his feet a paved work, and as it were the body of heaven in its clearness; while the sight of the glory of God was like devouring fire on the mountain in the eyes of the children of Israel. When Solomon prayed, the glory of God like a cloud filled the temple. Isaiah tells us, that "in the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphim. * * * And one cried to another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory." So we trace the subject through the prophetic ages. And when the visible glory of God fades away on the spires of Jewish synagogues, it is only to be lighted up on the descent of angels at Messiah's birth, saying, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace and good will to men." At his baptism, it descended upon him under the peaceful emblem of a dove. At his transfiguration, it enveloped him like a cloud, and caused his face to shine as the sun, his garments to be white

as snow, and his hair as pure wool; and when he ascended, it was on a bright cloud of glory. But did Christ take all this glory with him to heaven? Nay; for it caused the face of dying Stephen to look like the face of an angel, and so illuminated him, that he saw all the way into heaven. And often may be seen the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, shining on the faces of Zion's sons and daughters. O Lord, let the cloud of glory overshadow us now. May it light us all the way through this howling wilderness; and when we close our eyes in death on all sublunary objects, may it be to open them with sweet surprise on visions of glory, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God! Then we shall see glory, feel glory, sing glory, and shout glory; and it will be all glory to God and the Lamb for ever and ever. Amen.

SERMON XXIV.

THE SUBJECTS OF BAPTISM.

To notice all the difficulties, and answer all the sophisms with which the captious disputants and vain wranglers of modern times have obscured this subject, though not very hard, does not come within the limits of our present plan; and, therefore, will not be attempted. Our design is to present a plain, concise discourse on the subjects of baptism, reserving what we have to say on the mode for another time. But before we take up the main subject, permit us to make a few remarks on the nature of the ordinance, as it is exhibited in the sacred Scriptures; and,

1. There are various baptisms, which were administered for various purposes; thus, (1.) Some "were baptized unto Moses," or initiated as subjects of his law. (2.) Others received from John "the baptism of repentance," which taught them the necessity of repentance, and brought them

under obligation to repent. (3.) This was followed by the baptism of Christ, or that which is used in the Christian Church; and which is not only a badge of profession, but also an outward sign of the inward work of grace, the purification of our nature, which all need to fit them for heaven. Hence, the baptism of water, and that of the Spirit, are so frequently associated by the sacred writers, in reference to the same subjects; for example, Acts x, 47, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?"

2. The design of the Christian baptism appears farther from the name in which it is administered. At the day of Pentecost, Peter required the Jews, who had openly rejected the Messiah, to be baptized, specially, "in the name of Jesus Christ," as an open recantation of their error; but when our Savior sent out his ministers to evangelize the world, in order to give the Gentiles the knowledge of the true God, he commanded them to baptize "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

3. What then is essential to the ordinance of baptism? Answer, the application of water, in the name of the Triune God, by any one duly authorized as Christ's minister; and whoever is thus baptized, whether by sprinkling or plunging, is legally baptized: and, hence, the folly, not to say impiety, of repeating the same ordinance, on the same subject, again and again, as some have done. On all these points, it would be easy to enlarge, but we must hasten to notice the subjects of baptism; and,

I. Adult believers are proper subjects.

1. All who believe in the ordinance at all, admit that adult believers, who have not been baptized, are fit subjects of baptism. Here all are well agreed touching the premises, and we have nothing to object. But,

2. We are not so well agreed respecting the conclusions

drawn therefrom. It has been inferred, that because believers' baptism is right, all other baptisms are wrong. How does this follow? "We wot not." Suppose a statesman in a popular harangue, should undertake to prove that gold is a lawful tender in the United States, and after referring to the Constitution of the general government, the journals of Congress, and various other documents, and displaying all his eloquence for an hour upon the subject, should, with much apparent triumph, conclude thus: Gold is a lawful tender, therefore silver is not! What would you think of his wisdom? The application is easy. Very commonly, a certain class of preachers in our day get up and labor for one, two, or three hours, to prove believers' baptism, which no one in the congregation denies; and then finish by telling us, believers' baptism is right, therefore all other baptisms are wrong! Query. Is this common-place error among them owing to the badness of the cause which they advocate?

II. True penitents are proper subjects of baptism.

1. Baptism is one of the means of grace; and, therefore, suitable for penitents, who need all the help they can get. So Peter understood it, as appears from the advice he gave those who were smitten under his preaching: "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost," Acts ii, 37, 38. Here we can but mark the difference between the system of some Calvinistic teachers, and that of the Gospel. Their system is, 1. Conversion. 2. Repentance. 3. Pardon; and lastly, baptism. But Peter's arrangement is, 1. Repentance. 2. Baptism. 3. Pardon; and, 4. The witness of the Spirit.

2. Other strong proofs that the apostles received penitent sinners into the Church by baptism, are found in the 8th chapter of the Acts. After Philip had preached at Samaria, and baptized many, both men and women, Peter and John went down and "prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost: for as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." Observe, they were baptized, but had not received the Spirit, and of course they were not converted. In the same chapter we have the account of Simon, who believed the preaching of Philip, and was baptized by him; to whom Peter afterward said, "I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity." We would inquire, was he so when he was baptized? Or did he get converted before he was baptized, and afterward fall from grace? "Whether of the twain do you choose?"

III. Infants and little children, we think, are proper subjects of baptism, according to the Scriptures. It may not be amiss to remark here, that a very easy method of managing this controversy has been adopted by some modern teachers; that is, first, to deny the authority of the Old Testament in the case; and, secondly, alter the New so as to accommodate it to their own creed. But our general plan shall be to show that the writers of the Old and New Testaments agree in their testimony upon the subject.

1. All infants need the thing which baptism represents—namely, the purification of their nature by the grace of God. To charge my congregation with denying this, would be to charge them with being Pelagians; and we will lose no time in proving now what all Christians allow to be true—the depravity of human nature.

2. They all have a right to that purification which they need, and of which baptism is a sign. Children have an interest in the covenant of grace, or they have not; one

of these positions must be correct. If they have not, then the horrible doctrine of infant reprobation is true, the mere thought of which is enough to chill the blood in our veins! But if they have an interest in the covenant of grace, why deprive them of baptism, the initiating ordinance under that covenant, being the true Christian circumcision? "And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: in whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ," Colossians ii, 11; that is, the baptism of the Spirit, of which water baptism is a sign.

3. But there is no express precept for infant Church membership under the Gospel, says an objector. We answer, nor was it necessary respecting a thing that had existed, and been well understood, from the days of Abraham. In reference to this subject, several things are sufficiently plain and easy to be understood, and admitted by all who will impartially examine them; and, (1.) God made a covenant with Abraham, Genesis 17th chapter. (2.) Infants were recognized as subjects of this covenant by the rite of circumcision. (3.) That covenant was the Gospel in miniature; for Paul says, "And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all the nations be blessed," Galatians iii, 8. (4.) As infants were members under that Gospel covenant by circumcision, so they should be now by baptism, which Paul calls the circumcision of Christ. But to this view of the subject there are two objections that deserve to be noticed, 1. If infants are fit subjects of one Gospel ordinance, they are of another; and, therefore, to be consistent, you should admit them to the sacrament of the Lord's supper. Our answer is, under the former dispensation there were two distinguishing ordinances—namely, circumcision

and sacrifices. Answering to these, we have in this dispensation, baptism and the Lord's supper; but, as under the former infants were circumcised, but not required to offer sacrifices, so under the latter they are baptized, but not required to commune. But how does it come, says one, that you baptize children, both male and female; whereas, under the old covenant, only male children were recognized by circumcision? If this deserve any answer, we would give it by asking, how does it come that a man's wife and children are all called by his own name, and not by the name she had previous to her marriage? Objection 2. All this proves nothing respecting a Gospel ordinance, seeing the Jewish Church was only a national thing, and afforded only temporal blessings. Answer, we have already proved that the covenant God made with Abraham contained the Gospel, in that it promised to him, that in his seed, which Paul says "was Christ," all the nations should be blessed. Now, were Christ and his Gospel only temporal blessings? Beside this, Paul has proved in the epistle to Romans xi, 16–26, that Israel, or the Jewish Church, except those broken off by unbelief, was the original stock, into which the Gentile converts were grafted as branches, and became partakers of the nature thereof. Now, if the Jewish Church was only a national establishment, which promised nothing but temporal blessings, then the Christian Gentiles who were grafted in, became only a part of that national, temporal establishment; and the apostles too, who, on the same evening, ate with Jesus the Jewish passover, and the Christian sacrament of the Lord's supper, were only members of that same national, temporal Church! And, according to this doctrine, God never yet had, and peradventure never will have, an evangelical Church in our world.

4. The covenant which the Lord made with Abraham and his posterity, he renewed with Moses and all Israel in such a way as to afford positive proof of infant member-

ship. "Ye stand this day all of you before the Lord your God; your captains of your tribes, your elders, and your officers, with all the men of Israel, your little ones, your wives, and thy stranger that is in thy camp, from the hewer of thy wood, unto the drawer of thy water: that thou shouldest enter into covenant with the Lord thy God, and into his oath, which the Lord thy God maketh with thee this day: that he may establish thee to-day for a people unto himself, and that he may be unto thee a God, as he hath said unto thee, and as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob," Deut. xxix, 10–13. In this, among the rest of God's covenant people, Moses mentions "your little ones," without regard to sex; and unless it can be shown, that this right of membership is taken from them in the New Testament, their claim must be admitted. But where is it written, that they are deprived of this right? Surely not in Acts ii, 39, where Peter says, "For the promise is unto you, and to your children," &c. What promise? The promise God made to Abraham, and renewed to Israel as above, this promise is still "to you and to your children." In Acts iii, 25, this explanation is confirmed. "Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed." But stop! Mr. Campbell has found a positive prohibition of infant Church membership. Where? In Galatians iv, 29, 30, "But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. Nevertheless, what saith the Scripture? Cast out the bond-woman and her son: for the son of the bond-woman shall not be heir with the son of the free-woman." Here, every body sees, that the excommunicated party were "cast out" for the sin of persecution; and are infants persecutors? If not, the text has no relevancy to the case. Infants expelled from

the Church for the sin of persecution! Such are the ridiculous absurdities to which even learned men are driven, when they undertake to defend their cause by pleading for error in opposition to truth.

5. Should it still be urged, that there is no command to baptize infants and children, we would reply, neither is there any command to the contrary. But we think they are included in the general commission to baptize: "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them," &c., Matthew xxviii, 19. To know who are entitled to baptism, we have only to ascertain who compose the nations. Are there any infants and little children among them? If so, they are included in the commission to baptize, and when presented we dare not turn them away. Nor does the circumstance of their not being here particularly named, as distinguished from others, disprove their claim. Suppose you employ a man as a shepherd, and give him a general bill of instruction to take care of your flock of sheep during the winter. In the latter part of February, on a stormy day, you go out to see how he manages; and, behold, he has all the old sheep housed, and supplied with provender, but the lambs are all left out and exposed to the storm; and though the dams are bleating within, and the lambs mournfully crying without, he stands at the gate of the fold with a bush, beating them back at every turn. You inquire, why do you thus cruelly treat the tenderest of my flock? He answers, you told me to take care of your sheep, but did not mention the lambs in particular; therefore, I thought they must be left out. Now, who does not see the analogy between this case and that of the advocates of exclusive adult baptism? They claim to be shepherds of the flock of Christ, and to act under the precept, "Feed my sheep." By and by they will be called to an account; and, lo, they have the strong believers housed in the Church, or grazing on the pastures of grace, but their

infants and little children are driven off with their Church discipline, and left to wander on the devil's commons, shift for themselves, or starve to death. Query. Will the chief Shepherd and Bishop of souls say to them, "Well done good and faithful servants?" We think not in this particular; for Christ not only says, "Feed my sheep," but also, "Feed my lambs." And the best way is to put the mark of Christian baptism upon them at the out-set, and thereby bring them into the fold, where they can be attended to in order.

6. So the apostles understood their commission, and acted accordingly, baptizing whole families, from the oldest to the youngest, on the profession of the faith of the heads thereof. Observe, not the faith of the families, but the heads of families. Lydia and her house, the jailer and his household, named in Acts xvi, and the house of Stephanas, 1 Corinthians i, 16, are examples. As it regards the pretended argument, that there were no children in those families, it is a mere quibble. Look into the state of society around you, take the families as they come, and how many of them will you pass before you find three without children? Perhaps sixty—that is, as one to twenty; therefore, there are about nineteen reasons to believe that those families baptized by the apostles contained children, for one reason to believe they did not; and feeble indeed must that system be, which has nineteen chances to be wrong, and only one to be right!

7. The words and conduct of the Savior are favorable to infant baptism. "And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them; and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he

shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them." This evidence in favor of infant baptism may be briefly presented as follows—namely, (1.) "And they brought," as Isaiah had foretold, "they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders." (2.) Whom? "Young children;" or as Luke called them, "little infants," of tender age. (3.) "Unto him," Christ, whose grace they needed. (4.) The object was, that they might be blessed; and he received them willingly, for "he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them." "But he did not baptize them," says one. Neither did he baptize any adult, John iv, 2. (5.) "The disciples rebuked," or reproved, "those that brought them," as many do now. (6.) The cause of this probably was, that they were under eight days of age; and, according to the custom of the times, too young for dedication. (7.) "Jesus was much displeased," and will any presume to repeat the offense? (8.) "And said, Suffer the little children to come unto me," or be brought as above. (9.) "For of such is the kingdom of God." What kingdom? If you say the Church militant, or visible kingdom of Christ, the question is decided. If you say the kingdom of grace in the heart, of which baptism is the outward sign, we are safe in the argument; and if you say the kingdom of glory, or Church triumphant, it will answer us as well; for if they are fit for the Church above, they are for the Church below. And if there was not another passage of Scripture on the subject, this one would be sufficient to prove, by fair inference, the right of infants to baptism. We say, by fair inference; for we do not profess to be expressly commanded in so many words to baptize infants. Still in this practice, we are at least as well sustained by Scripture authority, as are the advocates of exclusive immersion. They cannot find so much as the word

immerse in the standard version of the Old or New Testament in reference to the ordinance of baptism, and have no authority for the practice of immersion, except inference, aided by their own construction of the sacred Scriptures. But we must defer our argument on that subject to another occasion.

8. There are several objections to the doctrine; and, 1. It does them no good, because they know nothing of the matter. And does nothing do us any good, but what we have knowledge of at the time? Then the food that nourished us when helpless infants, did us no good; the sacrifice of Christ that redeemed us, did us no good! But this doctrine is not believed by them who urge it, as appears from their own actions. For illustration, here is an opposer of infant baptism, he is elected to an office of profit; and for the faithful performance of the duties of his office, he enters into bond with security to the government, in which he binds himself, his heirs, &c., some of whom are little children. Now ask him, why do you bind your little children? they know nothing of the transaction. "True," says he, "yet this obligation stands good in law." Indeed! So we baptize our children; for though they know nothing of it now, it stands good in the divine law. Objection 2. Repentance and faith are required in order to baptism; but infants cannot repent and believe, therefore they cannot be baptized. Answer, repentance and faith are required in order to salvation; but infants cannot repent and believe, therefore infants cannot be saved! This old, worn-out objection needs no other than the old answer above, which shows either that the objection is not founded in truth, or else that all the infants are reprobates! The fact is, repentance and faith are required of adults, as conditions both of baptism and salvation; but of infants, they are not required as conditions of either; and, consequently, all such texts as the objection alludes to, prove nothing for or against infant

baptism, for they say nothing on the subject. Objection 3. Nothing but an express, divine command can authorize a positive institution. Answer, then nothing can authorize those who say so, to give the sacrament to women! These objections are too trite, and have been too long exploded, to justify present discussion. Objection 4. Infant baptism is a great barrier to Christian communion. But who made it so? This never made any difficulty in the union of Christians, until the advocates of exclusive adult baptism raised the bar; nor does it now with any but themselves; for against this rite they stand single-handed, and make but a feeble opposition.

On a review of our rapid plan, it will be seen, that we have admitted the claims of believers to this ordinance, without invalidating those of penitents or infants. In reference to the latter, we have shown, that they need, and under the covenant of grace are entitled to purification; that baptism is the sign of that purification; that they were included in the Abrahamic covenant, which was a Gospel covenant; that their membership was subsequently recognized in the Church of Israel, which was the stock into which the Christians, as branches, were ingrafted; that this membership, so far from being taken from them, was rather confirmed under the Christian economy; that they, by fair implication, were included in the general commission to baptize; that the apostles, acting under this commission, baptized whole families, great and small; that the words and conduct of Christ were all favorable to the practice of infant baptism; and that the objections against it are unfounded.

In conclusion, we have just to say, that the claims of infants and little children to baptism, are so well supported by Scripture, reason, and the fitness of things, that the whole Christian world are generally agreed to admit them. The Greek Church, Roman Church, Church of England,

the Lutherans, Protestant Episcopal Church, Kirk of Scotland, various classes of Presbyterians, Methodists, and in a word, every branch of the Christian Church on earth, with but one honorable exception, namely, the Baptist Church, approve of infant baptism. The Quakers, or Friends, though a respectable people, believe in no outward ordinances, and therefore are not included at all in this calculation. And for our own part, we think it would be about as easy to keep up orchards without nurseries, literature without schools, or commonwealths without marriages, as to keep up a prosperous state of religion in the world without infant baptism. But with it, the cause is gaining, and will finally prevail over every opposition, until Christ shall claim the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession. Amen and Amen.

SERMON XXV.

THE MODE OF BAPTISM.

On one side of this subject it is contended, that they who are immersed by an administrator who has been immersed himself, and they only, are baptized. On the other side it is contended, that persons may be properly baptized, without being immersed. "Let every adult person, and the parents of every child to be baptized, have the choice either of immersion, sprinkling, or pouring," Methodist Discipline, page 69. The question to be discussed is, not whether immersion be baptism, but whether it be the only baptism. And as we have no time for further introduction, we shall proceed immediately to notice, in the plainest manner of which we are capable,

I. The arguments employed to prove that immersion is the only baptism.

II. The arguments against that system, and in favor of sprinkling and pouring.

I. In neither case can we, consistently with the brevity of our plan, attend to the subject in all its details, but we shall notice its principal features. The arguments to prove immersion the only baptism, which are principally relied on, are five—namely,

1. The definition of the word baptize. We shall not tax ourselves or hearers with any attempt to explain this word, by criticisms on the original, a practice which is seldom necessary, except for such as advocate a bad cause. Johnson says, "Baptize, to christen." Walker says, "Baptize, to administer the sacrament of baptism, sprinkle, plunge." Webster says, "Baptize, to administer the sacrament of baptism, to christen." Parkhurst says, "To baptize, to immerse in, or wash with water in token of purification from sin, and from spiritual pollution." The testimony of these four authors, that the word does not necessarily mean to immerse, ought to satisfy all reasonable people. But the plungers say, "It never means to sprinkle or pour, but always to dip or immerse." Let us try this definition by Mr. Campbell's rule in the debate with M'Auley, page 225, where he says, "Now, it is an universal rule, that the correct definition of a word, will always make good sense, when substituted in lieu of the term defined." We admit, that this is a correct rule; and, consequently, if the word baptize always means to dip or immerse, then dip or immerse will always make good sense when substituted for baptize. We will try it in a few places; and, (1.) Matthew iii, 11, "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but * * * he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." Now, change the terms thus, I dip you with water; but he shall dip you with the Holy Ghost, and dip you with fire! Here, according to this definition, water, the Holy Ghost, and fire, are converted into three ladles with which to dip the subjects of baptism. But perhaps they would prefer to substitute the term im-

merse. Then it would read, (allowing them to change the preposition also,) I immerse you in water; but he shall immerse you in the Holy Ghost, and in fire! When we read of people receiving the Holy Ghost, and the fire of God's love, we understand the language; but when we read of people being immersed in them, we understand it not. Do our opponents understand such figures? Again, 1 Corinthians x, 1, 2, our fathers "were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud, and in the sea." To say that our fathers were dipped unto Moses, would be singular; but Mr. C.'s new version says, they "were all immersed into Moses!" What all? The Israelites, more than six hundred thousand men that journeyed on foot, beside their women and children, all these "were immersed into Moses!" Then he was more pregnant with Jews, than the man was with devils, in whom they said, "Our name is legion: for we are many!" We find that the words dip and immerse, do not "always make good sense when substituted in lieu of" baptize; therefore, to baptize does not "always" mean to dip or immerse, themselves being judges. If it did, it would follow, according to the use made of it Mark vii, 4, where it is properly rendered wash, that the Jews were immersed before each meal: also, that they immersed their tables, couches, and all their furniture. Hence, the argument derived from the definition of the term baptize, fails to prove that immersion is the only baptism.

2. The next argument relied on, is taken from the baptism of Christ. The argument drawn from Christ's baptism, when reduced to any kind of form, appears to be this: Christ entered the pales of the visible Church by immersion, as an example to show us that we must become members of the Church by immersion also. To this we reply, (1.) Christ was initiated into the visible Church when eight days old by circumcision, and had never been excluded so

as to require a readmission. (2.) The baptism of John was not the same which Christ required his apostles to administer, as appears from the two following circumstances: 1st. John's disciples were not baptized in the name of the Trinity as Christ's were; for they told Paul at Ephesus, that though they had been baptized by John, they had not "so much as heard that there be any Holy Ghost;" and, of course, were not baptized in his name. 2d. Paul rebaptized John's disciples under the Gospel economy. Both of these facts are fully and fairly stated, Acts xix, 1–7. "And it came to pass, that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts, came to Ephesus; and finding certain disciples, he said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. And all the men were about twelve." Again, (3.) The washing or baptism of Christ was "to fulfill all righteousness." What righteousness? Of faith? Then we need not believe; for he fulfilled it all. Of baptism? Then we need not be baptized; for he fulfilled it all. What then? The righteousness of the ceremonial law touching the priesthood; he fulfilled all of this, and made an end of it. And by comparing the law of Moses in the case with the history of Christ's baptism, it will appear that the baptism he received of John was simply his dedication to the priestly office. The law regulating the priest-

hood required that the subject ordained should be from thirty to fifty years old; so it is said, "when Christ began to be about thirty years of age, he came to John to be baptized of him." The law required the priest to be washed before the door of the tabernacle, Exodus xl, 12. Christ was washed at Jordan before the door of the visible Church. The priest was anointed with oil, Leviticus 8th chapter; so Christ was anointed "with the oil of gladness," the Holy Ghost that descended upon his head like a dove, the emblem of peace. All admit that Christ was "the high priest of our profession;" but when was he consecrated to that office, if not by John at the Jordan? From all which it appears, that this baptism was only to fulfill the righteousness of the ceremonial law respecting his office as priest. (4.) It is not said, that Christ was immersed. Ah! but he "went up straightway out of the water;" and, therefore, he must have been under it, you say. But all we understand to be meant by the words, "Went up straightway out of the water," is, that he ascended immediately from the water, or went up from the banks of Jordan, to receive the descent of the Spirit. So it is explained by Watson, Martindale, Benson, and others. There is no proof that Christ was immersed, either express or by necessary inference; and if he was, it was never intended as an example for us, seeing it was only his dedication to the priestly office.

3. The next argument relied on to prove exclusive immersion, is the baptism of the eunuch, mentioned in the 8th chapter of Acts, "And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water," &c. The circumstance of their leaving the carriage and descending to the water, may be accounted for by the fact that they were travelers, and had no other means of getting it. But the strength of the argument is founded on the words into and out of;

which, however, either prove nothing, or else prove too much; for "they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch;" consequently, if the eunuch's going into the water proves that he was immersed, it follows, fairly, that Philip's going into the water proves he was immersed at the same time; and, therefore, to follow the apostolic mode, according to this doctrine, every time a minister immerses a subject, he should immerse himself also. Beside, the preposition into does not uniformly mean all under; for Christ "went up into a mountain," when he preached his memorable sermon; so Philip and the eunuch "went down both into the water." Now, if in the latter case they were all under the water, then in the former, our Savior was all under the mountain when preaching. Once more, the common sense construction of the case is unfavorable to immersion. A man says, "I rode down into the river, watered my horse, and returned." Would not this be proper language? Yet who (but a Baptist so called) would ever think of the horse and rider being entirely under the water?

4. The next argument is raised from the doctrinal references to the action of baptism used by Paul, Romans vi, 1–11, too long to quote, but the part principally relied on, is, "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." It is thought to be very plain from this text, that water baptism is designed to represent the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, and therefore the subject must be immersed. We reply, (1.) Is there any mention made of water here? Not any; and if there was, and that for the purpose, as you suppose, of representing the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, what then, we ask, is the Lord's supper intended

for? We have always supposed, with the Christian world generally, that the Lord's supper was designed to show forth his death, or what he had done for us by redemption, and water baptism to show what he does in us by his Spirit; but, according to your system, we have two sacraments to represent his sufferings for us, and none to represent his grace in us! If we were to administer the Lord's supper only as an emblem of conversion, we should pervert the ordinance, and destroy its original design; and when others administer baptism as an emblem of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection, do not they pervert this ordinance, and destroy its original design? Certainly. Then administer as you will, but refer it to its proper object. (2.) Every burial implies three things—namely, an agent, an action, and an object acted upon; but here, the agent is baptism, "buried by baptism," the action is burial, and the object is the subject interred. And what is the nature of this death, burial, and resurrection? Answer, it is a death and burial "unto sin," and a resurrection unto "newness of life." Then whatever baptism Paul here speaks of, it is that which produces in believers a death unto sin, or a change from sin to holiness; for this is the subject of his argument. And what baptism is it that converts the soul? Answer, the baptism of the Holy Ghost; and this is, therefore, the baptism which Paul here speaks of, where his design is to prove, that as Christ died for sin, we must die unto sin; and as Christ rose again, so we must rise with him to newness of life. Hence, this text proves nothing in regard to water baptism, inasmuch as it says nothing on the subject. The case in Colossians, 2d chapter, is similar, and the argument need not be repeated. The next and last general argument for exclusive immersion that we shall notice, is,

5. The places where and the circumstances under which the ordinance was administered, show that it must

have been by immersion; and, (1.) "John was baptizing in Ænon, near to Salim, because there was much water there; and they came, and were baptized." Every body knows that much and little are relative terms. A never-failing spring or well would answer all the purposes of any congregation assembled for religious purposes, except plungers. But, (2.) The people were baptized of John in Jordan, and therefore must have been immersed. We answer, first, he might have baptized thousands standing in Jordan, or between the banks of Jordan, without immersing one of them. It does not necessarily mean under. A man may be in a river without being under water. We give the following example: "And thou shalt command the priests that bear the ark of the covenant, saying, When ye are come to the brink of the water of Jordan, ye shall stand still in Jordan. * * * And the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan," Joshua iii, 8, 17. Why not conclude, therefore, that John's baptizing "in Jordan" means only at, by, or with the water of Jordan? The last corresponds exactly with John's own words, where he said, "I indeed baptize you with water," that is, I apply the water to you, and not you to the water. We answer, secondly, that John on some occasions baptized not in Jordan, but in a house. "These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing," John i, 28. Bethabara means a house of passage, and stood, not in the river, but "beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing." Query. Could John be in Jordan and beyond Jordan at the same time? We trow not. Again, John x, 39, 40, "Therefore they sought again to take him; but he escaped out of their hand, and went away again beyond Jordan, into the place where John at first baptized; and there he abode." Where did

Christ live? "In the place where John at first baptized." And did our Savior live in the river? No. Neither did John baptize in the river; for it was "away beyond Jordan." Thus, after a brief examination of all the principal arguments in favor of exclusive immersion, we have crossed, dry-shod, all the creeks, ponds, rivers, and lakes, that our good friends, the dippers, have been able to discover; and, now, our way being clear of watery obstructions, we shall proceed to notice,

II. The arguments against that system, and in favor of affusion, or sprinkling and pouring. From the history of the first spreading of the Gospel, as contained in the Acts of the Apostles, it is obvious that wherever the people received the Gospel message, they acknowledged their belief and interest in it by receiving baptism. Observe,

1. The baptism of Paul, Acts 9th and 22d chapters. The facts of whose case are, (1.) He was baptized in the city of Damascus. (2.) He was baptized on the street called Straight. (3.) He was baptized in the house of Judas. (4.) He was baptized, not lying down in water, but standing, either on his knees or feet; for Ananias said to him, "Arise, and be baptized." (5.) He was baptized before he was converted—"Be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Here then is one illustrious example of baptism in a private dwelling house; and, of course, not by immersion.

2. The case of the jailer and his family, Acts xvi, who took conviction from the circumstance of the miraculous interposition of God in the deliverance of Paul and Silas, whom he had in custody as prisoners. He "brought them out," that is, of "the inner prison," and inquired what he should do to be saved? They instructed him. He washed their stripes; and they baptized him, and all his, straightway. After which he took them into his own house, and entertained them, not as prisoners, but as ministers. Now,

if the apostles had to grope off at midnight, out of the city, and into the country, to hunt a river, creek, or pond, to baptize this family in, is it not strange that nothing is said on the subject? To make immersion out of such a case as this, requires a degree of skill in logic to which none have yet attained.

3. The case of the Gentiles, Acts x. Cornelius "had called together his kinsmen and friends; and as Peter was coming in," that is, into the house to preach to them, "Cornelius met him" at the door. Peter preached, and the Holy Ghost fell on the people. "Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord." Now, though Peter called for objections, and though he administered the ordinance in the house of Cornelius, yet none was made. No one was heard to say, this sprinkling will not answer, you must go to a river and immerse them. Ah, Peter, it was well for thee thou didst not live to see thy administration disproved by modern apostles!

4. The three thousand on the day of Pentecost. Let us take a brief view of the circumstances. The meeting of the disciples was at "the third hour of the day," or nine o'clock. After the Holy Ghost fell on them, and they commenced rejoicing, it took sometime for the crowd to collect, who looked on sometime longer before Peter commenced his memorable sermon. This produced a second excitement more general than the first, and not until after this excitement subsided, could they have attended to any regular Church business; yet on that day they received and baptized three thousand souls, although it must have been in the after part of the day before they commenced this business. Now, suppose, the apostles to have proceeded on the same system as our immersers, namely, in

every case to hear a circumstantial relation of the candidate's conversion, then take the voice of the Church upon it; and after passing through three thousand cases in this way, repair to some river, mill-pond, or creek, and hear a long harangue by one of the brethren, about going down into the water, and coming up out of the water; and, finally, to close the scene, suppose each of the apostles to take one at a time, repeat the ceremony, turn the subject's face towards the heavens, lay him horizontally under the water, then raise him up and send him out to receive the greetings of his brethren, what time, think ye, would they have got through? The above four cases are all against immersion, as being the apostolic mode of baptism; by fair, and sometimes irresistible conclusions, they show its fallacy. But,

5. We will attend now to some arguments more directly in favor of sprinkling; and, (1.) When Isaiah said of Christ, lii, 15, "So shall he sprinkle many nations," he spake prophetically; and what was the fulfillment of this prophecy? Answer, the execution of the commission which Christ gave his disciples to "teach all nations, baptizing them," &c.; but if so, then what the prophet calls sprinkle, our Savior calls baptizing. (2.) "And having an high priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water," Hebrew x, 22. Here the influences of grace upon the heart are called sprinkling, of which the washing or baptism of the body is an outward sign, and consequently should be applied by sprinkling. It is objected by Mr. Campbell, "Was there ever such an emblem! the thing signified precedes the emblem!" Answer, if this objection be well founded, how is immersion an emblem of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ? Do not the things signified precede the emblem eighteen hundred years? It is a poor rule which will not work both ways.

(3.) "There are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood," 1 John v, 8. Here we have the Spirit's influence, baptism, and the eucharist. Now as the eucharist represents the blood of Christ, and baptism represents the Spirit's influence, both of which are spoken of under the figure of sprinkling, and these three agree in one, it follows that baptism must be by sprinkling also. (4.) In 1 Corinthians x, 1, 2, Paul says, our fathers "were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud, and in the sea." Were they up amidst the cloud? No; for they remained on the earth. Were they covered with the sea? No; for they walked "on dry ground." How then? The cloud sprinkled them; and this Paul called baptism. On that occasion there were perhaps more than one million of persons, including men, women and children, every one of whom was baptized, but not one of them immersed. However, there were some others immersed very shortly afterwards, namely, Pharaoh and his host, who went down to destruction together. These were indeed immersed, when they sank in the Dead Sea, but not baptized that we read of.

6. It is easy to prove that pouring is called baptism. When the disciples felt the descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, Peter pronounced it to be the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy, viz., "I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh." And in Acts, chapter 1 and verse 5, Christ, who showed himself alive after his passion, said to his disciples in reference to the same thing, "For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." Put these together, and you have certain proof that what Joel and Peter called pouring, Christ called baptism. And if people are baptized with the Spirit by pouring, may they not be baptized with water in the same way? These are a few among the many authorities for baptism by affusion.

7. It has been recently taught that immersion is regenera-

tion. Mr. Campbell says it is "so significant, and so expressive, that when the baptized believer rises out of the water, is born of water, enters the world a second time, he enters it as innocent, as clean, as unspotted as an angel." So did not Peter think when he said, that baptism is "not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answering of a good conscience towards God." If the above doctrine be true, then all who are not immersed, are unregenerated and must be lost; not only the heathens, but all the Christian world, (except the few immersed,) being only unbaptized heathens, are going to perdition. This is the subject of our unbelief. We are opposed, not so much to immersion, as to that sort of bigotry, which says, you shall receive the ordinance of baptism in this way, or you shall not receive it at all. Surely, if immersion was so essential to our salvation, the word immersion would be found somewhere in the sacred Scriptures, and not be confined wholly to Mr. C.'s spurious version. And if to baptize by sprinkling or pouring was a perversion of the ordinance, the sacred writers would not have said so much in its favor; nor would the Lord so signally bless the labors of those employed in perpetuating that perversion. Yet nothing but "all under" will do for some people. Be it so, if they wish. We can make out very well without so much bathing. The baptism of the Spirit is the most important. There is "one baptism" for all true believers, whose privilege it is to be "baptized into one Spirit." Give us this, and we are content.

On a review of our subject, it will be recollected that we have declined any attention to history, tradition, dreams, or impressions; confining ourselves to the sacred Scriptures as closely as possible, we have noticed,

I. The arguments for exclusive immersion, and found that neither,

1. The definition of the word baptize;

2. The baptism of Christ;

3. The baptism of the eunuch;

4. The doctrinal allusions to the action of baptism; nor,

5. The places where the ordinance was administered, afford any proof of the doctrine. But on the contrary, we found,

II. The arguments against that system, and in favor of affusion to be many and strong, viz., against immersion,

1. The baptism of Paul in Damascus, and in the house of Judas.

2. The baptism of the jailer and family on his own premises.

3. The baptism of the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius.

4. The baptism of three thousand at Pentecost in a few hours; and more directly in favor of affusion,

5. That what Isaiah called sprinkle, Christ called baptize. The doctrinal reference to baptism in Hebrews and 1 John v, 8, and the baptism of more than one million at once by sprinkling, 1 Corinthians x, 1, 2.

6. That Christ called pouring baptism in the 1st chapter of Acts; and,

7. That immersion is not regeneration, nor in any wise essential to salvation.

May God save all, whether sprinkled or plunged! Amen.

SERMON XXVI.

PETER'S SECOND CONVERSION.

"And when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren," Luke xxii, 32.

THE notion of some people, that Peter was indued with official pre-eminence over the other apostles, we believe, is without any authority from the sacred Scriptures. Still his is a case of much interest. Called at an early period of our

Lord's ministry, Peter left all to follow Christ, and became a traveling preacher of the married class, and was zealously affected in the great cause of his Lord and Master, who admitted him among his personal, confidential friends at the mount of transfiguration, and at the garden of Gethsemane; and though he once fell by transgression, he afterward recovered by grace, and subsequently led a life of toil, sacrifice, suffering and usefulness, and finally, as is generally believed, obtained a martyr's crown. There appears to be something more than tradition to sustain the belief of Peter's crucifixion. Our Lord said to him, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God." The death by which he should glorify God, was that of crucifixion, indicated by the stretching forth of his hands. Inasmuch then as Peter was not only a disciple of Christ, and an apostle, but finally became a martyr, whatever is recorded of him by the inspired writers, must be deeply interesting to every pious and intelligent Christian. The words of our text refer to an important period of his history, and one full of useful instruction to us all, namely, his apostasy and restoration, which will more fully appear as we progress in our discourse. We propose to speak,

I. Of Peter's religious state prior to the arraignment and trial of Christ.

II. Of the fall he experienced during that arraignment and trial.

III. Of his restoration to the divine favor.

IV. Of his subsequent usefulness.

I. The religious state of Peter for sometime before and at the time our Savior addressed him in the language of the text, was that of gracious acceptance, of divine favor—his

sins were pardoned, and he was converted; if not precisely as men are converted now, still he was converted in a sufficient sense, according to the day of grace afforded him. In support of this position, we shall avail ourselves of several plain Scriptural arguments, such as are, at least, satisfactory to our own mind.

Peter was a member of the visible Church, and a prominent disciple of Jesus, who said to his apostles, and to Peter among the rest, "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." This verse, with the entire 15th chapter of John, from which it is taken, expresses the love of Christ to his disciples in such a manner, that their claims to saving grace cannot well be misunderstood.

Again, Peter was admitted to the sacrament of the Lord's supper the first time it was administered. No one, who carefully reads the 26th chapter of Matthew's Gospel, will deny this; for it is not only said, that Christ "sat down with the twelve," and gave the consecrated bread and cup to them, (except Judas, whom he accused and expelled,) but Peter is named as being present on the occasion. When Jesus said, "All ye shall be offended because of me this night," then "Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended."

We have named these two points in Peter's religious history, not because they are conclusive to our own mind, when considered apart from his whole history, that he was a converted man, but because they must be so to some others, according to their own showing. We believe a true penitent may be admitted into the Church, to the sacraments and all the means of grace on Gospel principles, before he obtains any evidence of his acceptance with God; but you know there are very many excellent Chris-

tians in several "evangelical Churches" so called, who think no one can be properly received into the Church, or at the Lord's table, without evidence of a saving change. Of course they must admit Peter was converted, because Christ received him into the Church himself, and gave him the sacrament of the Lord's supper out of his own hand.

Another evidence that Peter was a changed man, is derived from the fact that our Lord had put him into the ministry. This is to our mind much more conclusive than the argument drawn from his position in the Church and at the sacramental table. The ministry of the Gospel is not a mere human profession, which a man may choose or refuse with impunity, as he does that of law or medicine; God calls certain men to this work, appoints and sends them out, and whoever assumes the ministerial character without this commission, is an intruder into the sacred office, and guilty of the sin of presumption; and to suppose that God appoints any one to do this work before he is converted, is to suppose he sends the blind to lead the blind, that both may fall into the ditch. His plan is to convert men before he sends them out to convert others; consequently, Peter's call to the work of an apostle, is conclusive evidence of his conversion; and though he was not previously educated for the ministry, he was thoroughly educated in the ministry, which was far better. How this call was made known to Peter in the first instance may be gathered from these words: "And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishers. And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left their nets, and followed him."

Beside all this, Peter had faith, and it was genuine faith too; for Christ said to him, "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." Now, to say, that Peter's faith was

not the true saving faith, and that he was deceived as to his state of salvation, is virtually to say, Christ, who knows the hearts of all men, prayed that his false faith might continue, and that he might be confirmed in his delusion, which would be absurd, not to say blasphemous. But not so, our Savior said immediately preceding the text, "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations; and I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." If any one still doubts whether Peter had saving faith, let him hear the testimony recorded by Matthew in these words: "Then answered Peter, and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore? And Jesus said unto them, Verily, I say unto you, That ye which have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive a hundred-fold, and shall inherit everlasting life."

II. We shall next notice the fall which Peter experienced.

Of this fall, Jesus gave him a most solemn and faithful warning in these words: "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have thee, that he may sift thee as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." Yet he saw that Peter, through rashness and self-confidence, would involve himself, and then by the fear of man would be ensnared, and finally would so far forget himself as to deny his Lord; he also saw that Peter would recover by grace, and said to him, "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren;" or when thou art returned from

thy flight, and restored from apostasy to the divine favor, encourage and build up my tempted disciples. Peter was very much surprised at this prophetic warning of his Master. "And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death." The meaning of Peter here appears to be this: Lord, why shouldest thou suspect me of proving unfaithful? If thy enemies this night should cause thee to be arrested and sent to prison, I am ready to go with thee; or if they should resort to violence and kill thee, I am ready to die with thee, rather than betray confidence, or prove ungrateful. Now, in this profession he was doubtless quite sincere, but soon after forgot where his strength lay, and became too self-confident, as will appear in the sequel. Jesus then told him plainly the part he would act in the trying hour which was coming upon him and his disciples. "And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me." Perhaps Peter was grieved to hear this, and doubted the correctness of the statement; yet it all came to pass in due time, and in a very singular manner.

The first thing we hear amiss of Peter after this, was, being found asleep during the Savior's agony in the garden, when he was specially required to watch and pray—like some stupid souls in Church, indifferent to the terrible conflict now in progress between light and darkness. Awake! awake! "what meanest thou, O sleeper." The next suspicious circumstance in Peter's conduct, was, the resort to improper means of defense when attacked by the persecuting enemy. After Jesus had been in an agony, and prayed more earnestly, he returned to his disciples the third time, and said to them, "Sleep on now, and take your rest: it is enough, the hour is come; behold the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise up, let us go: lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand." This is evi-

dently the language of reproof, intended to show the disciples it was then too late to trouble themselves with watching and prayer. Peter, partially roused by this reproof, and startled yet more by the immediate assault of the enemy, drew his sword, rushed forward, and began to cut his way through the thickest ranks of the enemy, and actually smote off the ear of Malchus, the high priest's servant; "Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword, shall perish with the sword."

When Jesus was arrested, or rather when he voluntarily surrendered himself into the hands of his enemies, the disciples "all forsook him and fled," and the next we hear is, "And Peter followed him afar off," already partially backslidden, and his fervent love very much abated—like many in the Church, who have a name to live, but are well nigh dead. Their names stand on the Church book, but when their leader calls them in class meeting, he gets no response; the brethren meet to pray, but they are absent; they may attend Church occasionally on the Sabbath, but it is to little purpose; for during the most interesting revivals, they stand off as idle spectators.

When Peter arrived at the house of Caiaphas, where Jesus was undergoing his examination before "all the chief priests, and the elders and the scribes," who sought false witnesses to condemn him, he, instead of standing up by the side of his Master, ready to assert his innocence, went over to the enemy, as set forth in these words: "And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, Peter sat down among them." Professors of religion may go among the people of the world to transact lawful business, or to impart religious instruction, and return unhurt; but when they deliberately leave their brethren to associate with the enemies of Christ, they afford sad proof that their hearts are estranged from him.

Now, after all this, it will not appear quite so strange that Peter finally denied his Lord altogether. The fullest and clearest account of this transaction is given by Matthew. "Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee. But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest. And when he was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth. And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man. And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee. Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew." Was not this conduct of Peter most astonishing? His first denial was a willful departure from truth; the second denial was a repetition of the falsehood, confirmed by an oath; and in the third denial he reiterates the same falsehood and perjury, with cursing and swearing. O Peter, how art thou fallen in the brief period of a few hours! In the evening he occupied the dignified position of a holy apostle, and before day he ranks among the profane and blasphemous enemies of Christ. Had he died in the evening, when he was united to Jesus by a saving faith, and was ready to go with him to prison and death, he would have gone to paradise as swiftly as winged angels could have borne him; but had he died the next morning before day, while denying his Lord with falsehood, perjury, and cursing, he would have descended into a deep, dark, and endless hell as rapidly as relentless devils could have dragged him. If the narrative ended here, it would be an awful one indeed; but it is our happy privilege to speak,

III. Of Peter's restoration to the divine favor.

This restoration was brought about by means no less remarkable than those of his fall. The crowing of the

cock was of itself insignificant and unimportant; but viewed in connection with the Savior's prediction, and all the chain of concurrent events then surrounding Peter, it was well calculated to wake up reflection in his mind, and set a thousand thoughts in motion. So powerful was the impression made on Peter's mind by this predicted signal, that he probably looked up almost involuntarily toward his injured Master; "And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter." O what a look was that! No angry word was spoken, no harsh reproof was administered, no scowl was expressed in the countenance of Jesus, but he gave Peter a look of intelligence that flashed the light of conviction to his conscience—a look of melting pity which broke his obdurate heart; "and Peter went out, and wept bitterly." No doubt he then experienced the truth of the declaration, "The last state of that man is worse than the first." The sin of apostasy being committed against increased light, is followed by conviction more pungent than that of sin committed "ignorantly in unbelief." Hence, Peter drank the cup of bitterness to the very dregs, attended probably with a fear of rejection and destruction, bordering on despair.

There is no good reason to suppose that Peter found much relief, till after Christ rose from the dead. What must have been his feelings when his crucified Master laid cold in death, and he remembered his own conduct as contributing, indirectly, to that result, and was without the opportunity of seeking personal reconciliation? However, on the third morning he learned from the female disciples that Jesus was alive again, and that the angel which gave them the information had sent this message by them: "Tell his disciples, and Peter, that he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him, as he said unto you." The fact of Peter's being here singled out by name, was evidence he was not forgotten by the Savior, and must have acted as a reviving cordial on his wounded and disconsolate heart.

The next news is, "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon." Subsequently, he stood in the midst of the disciples, and showed unto them his hands and his side. "Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord;" for he said, "Peace be unto you." And no doubt these visions and salutations were specially grateful to unfortunate Peter, as it is more than probable he saw the Lord not only with his material eyes, but saw him by faith reconciled to his soul, and heard him say to himself especially, "Peace be unto you."

The sincerity of Peter's repentance was shortly afterward tested at the sea of Tiberias. During the interval between the resurrection and ascension of Christ, the disciples, while waiting for the day of Pentecost, partially returned to their former temporal employments as means of support. Several of them who had been fishers, went down to the Tiberias fishery, where "Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing. But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore; but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. Then Jesus said unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No. And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes." Immediately after this happy change in their prospect of success, John discovered who it was that stood on the shore talking with them, and "said unto Peter, It is the Lord," which so excited Peter that he leaped into the sea, and made haste to Jesus; the others soon followed in a little ship, and when all had arrived, and the net was secured with the fishes it contained, "Jesus said unto them, Come and dine," which they did accordingly. "So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon

Peter, Simon son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord: thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith to him again the second time, Simon son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord: thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep."

Several things here named are worthy of special remark. Why did Jesus ask Simon Peter the question, "Lovest thou me more than these?" that is, more than the other disciples loved him. Peter had said unto him, "Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended." As if he had said, John and James, and Andrew and Philip, and all the rest, may take offense, fly from or deny thee, yet will not I. Whereas, he was the first to fall away and deny his Lord; and now Jesus, by this question, "Lovest thou me more than these?" brings home his sin to his conscience, and humbles him in the dust under a sense of his weakness and unworthiness, but without passing any direct censure upon him, as he had repented. Again, why did Jesus thrice put the question to Peter, "Lovest thou me?" The reason was, Peter had thrice denied his Lord, and it was meet he should thrice recant his error, and as often renew his profession of love; and what is no less remarkable, as often as Peter renewed his profession of love, Jesus renewed his forfeited commission, "Feed my lambs," or "Feed my sheep." Well, it was enough, the breach was healed, and Peter was restored to the favor of God, and the confidence of his brethren, and began then to understand our text, "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."

IV. We shall now speak of Peter's subsequent usefulness.

At this point in Peter's history, it is probable he may have reasoned on this wise: "I know that I have fallen in a most shameful manner, and am equally sure that I have repented, and am restored to the divine favor; but how can the Lord condescend again to employ such an unfaithful and unworthy servant as I have been as an instrument to save souls?" That the Lord had called him to the work of the ministry before his fall he had no reason to doubt, but he knew his commission had been forfeited, and was slow of heart to believe it was renewed again. His fear, however, was soon after removed, by the extraordinary success which attended his ministry. At the meeting on the day of Pentecost, where Peter was the chief speaker, three thousand souls were added to the Church, which, with the hundred and twenty previously united in Christian and Church fellowship, made thirty-one hundred and twenty; and on another occasion shortly afterward where Peter was again the most prominent instrument, eighteen hundred and eighty more were awakened and brought under gracious influence, so that "many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand"—that is, as we understand it, the whole number of Christian believers at that time amounted to five thousand. On both these occasions, therefore, Peter strengthened his brethren in the faith of Christ.

The same effect was produced on the minds of his brethren by the miracles which he wrought, to a few examples of which we will now refer. We have heretofore remarked that Peter was an itinerant preacher. In the course of his travels he went down to Lydda, in the tribe of Ephraim, between Jerusalem and Cesarea, and miraculously healed an afflicted man, who had been long and well known to his neighbors, which produced a general refor-

mation among them. "And it came to pass, as Peter passed throughout all quarters, he came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lydda. And there he found a certain man named Eneas, which had kept his bed eight years, and was sick of the palsy. And Peter said unto him, Eneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole: arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately. And all that dwelt in Lydda and Saron saw him, and turned to the Lord."

Immediately after the above named occurrence, the disciples at Joppa, a prominent sea-port on the Mediterranean, sent for Peter to go there on the occasion of the much lamented death of a young woman of their society. Her name was Tabitha, which by interpretation was called Dorcas, and she had abounded in charity and good works. When Peter arrived, he found her laid out in her grave clothes ready for interment; "and all the widows stood by him weeping, and showing the coats and garments which Dorcas made while she was with them." These were garments which she had made with her own hands and given to the suffering poor, especially the widows, in her life time. The death of such a benefactress was a real loss, and no marvel that the poor stood round weeping. "But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning him to the body, said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up. And he gave her his hand, and lifted her up; and when he had called the saints and widows, he presented her alive. And it was known throughout all Joppa: and many believed in the Lord." Thus, it appears, that on both of these occasions, Peter greatly strengthened his brethren.

After this, Peter, perhaps much worn down with toil, turned in with brother Simon a tanner, living on the sea shore at Joppa, to rest a few days. On fast day, about noon, while Peter was on the house-top, or in the upper

part of the building praying, he became hungry and would have eaten, "But while they made ready, he fell into a trance, and saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth: wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven."

The day before, Cornelius, a devout Gentile at Cesarea, had a vision also, in which he was directed by an angel to send for Peter to go over and tell what he ought to do; and while Peter was meditating on his own wonderful vision, the messengers from Cornelius arrived and stood before the gate inquiring for him. Next day, accompanied by a few brethren, he went with the messengers to Cesarea, and found Cornelius and a congregation of his kinsmen and friends waiting for him. After hearing from Cornelius an explanation of the reason he had for sending after him, Peter saw clearly the meaning of his own vision. Before that, he had been troubled with limited notions of predestination, supposing the blessings of the Gospel were exclusively for the Jews; but God made a special revelation to convince him of his mistake, and show him that he was to preach free grace to every soul. "Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation, he that feareth him and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." The result proved that the reason of sending for Peter was a good one. "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And

they of the circumcision which believed, were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost." After preaching, Peter proceeded immediately to baptize the Gentile converts in the house of Cornelius; and by the glorious success of his ministry on that occasion, though his going to the Gentiles raised persecution against him at Jerusalem, greatly strengthened his brethren in the end; for when they objected that he went "to uncircumcised men," he rehearsed the whole matter; and "when they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life."

We beg indulgence, while we refer to one more incident in the life of this eminent apostle. Great persecution arose. Herod put James to death, and arrested Peter and had him ironed and imprisoned, intending to have him executed on a popular occasion after Easter, "but prayer was made without ceasing of the Church unto God for him." No doubt fear was entertained on the part of Herod of his escape, which he took much pains to prevent. The last night before the appointed day for his execution, "Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains," in the dungeon, the door no doubt locked and barred, while armed men outside, "keepers before the door kept the prison." Thus doubly secured, the hope of deliverance could scarcely be entertained. However, a special prayer meeting was held that night at the house of Mary, the mother of John, for Peter's benefit, where the brethren could supplicate for him supporting, if not delivering grace. The thought of his being murdered next day was truly distressing—the occasion of the prayer meeting was a moving one, and the spirit of agonizing prayer drove sleep far from them. They prayed till a late hour, when God sent his angel, who passed the outward guards without fear,

opened the doors with ease, entered the prison and made it light as day, touched Peter and said, "Rise up quickly; and his chains fell off." After Peter had bound on his sandals, the angel said, "Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me." When they had passed all obstructions and dangers, the angel departed from him, and Peter knew that he was delivered out of the hands of his enemies, and was free. Did he flee like a criminal escaping from justice? No; he went straight to the house of sister Mary to join the prayer meeting and rejoice with his brethren. When "Peter knocked at the door of the gate," the maid came, but when she knew his voice, she opened not for gladness, but ran back and told them Peter had come. "And they said unto her, Thou art mad." They thought the idea of his deliverance from all those chains and soldiers incredible. She reaffirmed the fact of his being at the gate. "Then said they, It is his angel"—they may have killed him, and his spirit may be here, but his body cannot; or it may be his guardian angel, but he alive? it cannot be. "But Peter continued knocking. And when they had opened the door, and saw him, they were astonished" to see the old soldier of the cross alive and unscathed by his enemies, and began to rejoice. "But he beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. * * * And he departed, and went into another place." So miraculous was Peter's deliverance, that the soldiers knew nothing of it till next morning. "Now as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers, what was become of Peter. And when Herod had sought for him, and found him not, he examined the keepers, and commanded that they should be put to death." This deliverance of Peter powerfully strengthened his brethren.

In conclusion, it may be properly inferred from the whole subject before us, that the ministers of Christ

should warn the righteous, as well as the wicked. This is our state of trial, and in it we are exposed to many dangers. No wise man will trust in his own heart or in his own strength, but in Christ. "By faith ye stand." When we let go our hold of faith on Jesus, our strength to resist temptation is gone, and we fall an easy prey to the enemy of souls. "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." We mean the preachers as well as priviate Christians; for they are as liable to temptation as others. We too should keep our bodies under and bring them into subjection as Paul did, lest having preached to others, we ourselves should by any means be cast-aways. Peter fell, and so may any of us. Some people are very much surprised to hear of the fall of a minister, but why should they be more surprised at the fall of a minister than that of a private member? Preachers are flesh and blood like other men, with this disadvantage, however, they have more to contend with than others; for Satan would rather secure the fall of one preacher than many private Christians, because faithful ministers are the most successful opposers of his works among men; consequently, Satan hurls his most fiery darts at God's faithful messengers: still they are perfectly safe so long as they continue to watch and pray and humbly trust in Christ. He that is for us is greater than all that can be against us, and says to us, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

Finally, there is, in the case of Peter, much to encourage every backslider in heart and in conduct, whether preacher or member, to repent and do his first works. May the Lord in mercy look upon all such! May they go out and weep bitterly as Peter did, and may the Lord reinstate them in his favor, and restore unto them the joy of his salvation! "And when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."

SERMON XXVII.

THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD, AND THE MEANS OF EXTENDING IT.

"Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased," Daniel xii, 4.

WHATEVER reference the text may have to past events, we believe, with Benson and other commentators, that its more important application is to Gospel times—to the present dispensation. "The lines have fallen to us in pleasant places." We live in a day to which God's ancient worthies looked with intense interest, such as we now feel in reference to the latter days' glory of the Christian Church. This view of the subject is authorized by our Savior's words to his disciples: "But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. For, verily, I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them." We purpose to speak,

I. Of the knowledge of God.

II. The means of extending that knowledge.

I. The word *knowledge*, according to Walker, means "certain perception; learning; illumination of the mind; skill in any thing; acquaintance with any fact or person," &c. An ancient writer says, "Knowledge is power." Hence the importance of knowledge to Christians in general, and Christian ministers especially. Knowledge gives to any man, who possesses it, influence in society for good or evil, according to the proper or improper use he makes of it. And it is wonderful to observe what an amount of knowledge one man may acquire in the course of a short life time, by regular and persevering application. But after all, the knowledge of man is limited, because his faculties are limited; and when he shall have attained all

the knowledge of which he is capable, he will still have occasion to admit the truth of what Moses said to all Israel. "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us, and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law."

The knowledge spoken of in the text, is that of sacred things, or as the apostle calls it, "the knowledge of the truth," where he unquestionably means saving truth, because he was exhorting believers to pray for all men, for the reason, that God our Savior "will have all men to be saved, and come unto the knowledge of the truth." This truth, of which we are to seek the knowledge, consists of two parts; first, the doctrines of the Gospel. These we should seek to know, by reading and studying the Bible with prayerful attention, instructive conversation, preaching, and consulting good authors with much close reflection; and, especially, the doctrines most essential to salvation, such as the fall and redemption of man, justification by faith, the witness of the Spirit, holiness, and future accountability. The knowledge of these and kindred doctrines is important to the well-being of man, and the more generally they are understood, believed, and practiced, the better will be the condition of society. Therefore, they who would withhold the Bible, or any other means of useful instruction from the people, are enemies to the best interest of mankind. Secondly. The knowledge of the truth comprehends experience, the knowledge of God in the remission of sin, which we understand to be the privilege of every true believer in Christ. It must be so from the very nature of the subject. The first part of the work of grace in the heart is conviction, or a sense of condemnation before God as sinners, which no man can feel without knowing he feels it. The next is repentance, or godly sorrow for sin; but can a man feel sorrow for sin, and not know that he feels it? Then comes pardon through faith

in Christ, by which our relation to God is changed, and we are relieved from condemnation and misery; but can any one be relieved from his guilt and distress of mind, and not know that he is relieved? Connected with this in point of time, but distinct in point of fact, is regeneration by the Holy Spirit, "Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." Now, can a man be regenerated, created anew in Christ Jesus, and not know it? Certainly not. Again, the fruits of this change, which immediately follow, are peace, joy, love, obedience, and freedom, or power over sin. Now, it is absurd to suppose any one can feel peace with God, joy in the Holy Ghost, the love of God shed abroad in his heart, the spirit of obedience, &c., and not know that he feels them. As well might we suppose that a man could be suddenly relieved from severe pain of body and entire prostration and the prospect of immediate death, and restored to perfect health and strength, with a grateful heart for his recovery, and yet be unconscious of the whole, as suppose a sinner could be converted, and not know it. We say, therefore, that experimental religion, from the very nature of it, must necessarily be a subject of knowledge.

Farther: that it is the privilege of true Christians to know their acceptance with God, is drawn from direct Scripture testimony. When Jesus spake to his disciples of the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, that was to be sent after his departure, and was to abide with them for ever, he said, "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." Now, can we know that we are in Christ, and Christ in us, and yet not konw it? John says, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." How can we know we are spiritually alive, and yet be ignorant of that life? Again, Paul says, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with

our spirit, that we are the children of God." When God's Spirit and our own spirit or conscience testify at once that we are his children, how can we be deceived? If an objector inquire, how can we know when we have the Spirit? We answer, by its fruit. Paul says, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance;" and if he then inquire how we know when we have this fruit, as peace, joy, love, &c., we would ask him how he knows when he is sick and when he is well, when he is hungry and when he is sufficed, when he is cold and warm; how he knows that he loves one thing and dislikes another; and finally how he knows that he is alive and not dead? If he say, these things are self-evident, and therefore admit of no higher proof, we reply, experimental religion is self-evident, its possessor knows that he has it, because he feels it; when he enjoys the witness of the Spirit, he is as conscious of spiritual, as he is of natural life.

Again, all the figures employed by the inspired writers to illustrate experimental religion, warrant the conclusion, that it is a subject of knowledge. We beg leave to submit a few examples. Suppose you are confined for a long time in a dark dungeon, and then brought out into open daylight and set at liberty, would you not be conscious of the change? And when the sinner is brought out of the darkness, bondage, and misery of sin, into the light, liberty, and consolation of the Gospel; or in Scripture language, delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son, in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins, does he not know it? Suppose a man fallen into a deep pit from which he cannot extricate himself, and after calling for help till he is exhausted, a friend brings a rope and windlass, draws him up, and places him on solid ground, would he not be conscious of his deliverance? And so did

David know, when the Lord brought him up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set his feet upon a rock, and established his goings; and put a new song in his mouth, even praise unto God. If we had a burden tied on our shoulders so that we could not escape from under it, and so heavy as to press us down to the earth, and some friend stronger than ourselves should cut the burden loose and let us go, we should certainly be conscious of our release; and does not the burdened soul know when he accepts the invitation, and tests the truth of the promise of Jesus, "Come unto me, all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest?" But lest we be tedious, we close our remarks on the first division of the subject, by repeating, the knowledge of the truth under consideration comprehends an acquaintance with the doctrines of the Gospel, and a personal knowledge of God in the remission of sins. We shall now notice,

II. The means of extending that knowledge.

The phrase, "many shall run to and fro," refers to these means. It is not to be understood as descriptive of a Church slumbering over a ruined world, nor yet of superstitious pilgrimages to old Jerusalem, or to Rome, but of the most efficient missionary and other movements to spread the peaceful and blessed influence of pure religion over the face of the whole earth.

We apprehend the chief of the means instituted to extend the knowledge of God, and that which gives direction and character to all the rest, is the Gospel ministry. It is true, there are means auxiliary to this, which should be vigorously used, and universally encouraged. For example: We should encourage the publication and distribution of religious tracts, because thereby the light of truth is carried into many dark corners of the earth, where more expansive means have not yet found access. We should by all proper means encourage Sabbath schools, because there is now in

them, under a course of training, an army of young soldiers of the cross, destined to spread desolation through all the kingdom of darkness, after we shall have gone the way of all the earth. Missions, both domestic and foreign, should be instituted and supported in earnest, because thereby "the poor have the Gospel preached to them," and the wilderness and the solitary places are made glad. Bible societies should be well sustained; for by them millions of destitute souls are supplied with the word of life. But after all, these are but auxiliaries to the regular Christian ministry, the grand moral lever which moves the world. On this, we presume, Daniel fixed his prophetic eye, when he said, "Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased;" and on this ministry we wish now to submit a few remarks.

The ministry which Christ instituted, and which is to be perpetuated to the end of the world, is a called and divinely authorized ministry. He who has no higher authority to act as a minister of the Gospel than his credentials signed by man, is not the ambassador of Christ. His ministers are appointed by himself, and their appointment is made known to them by the Holy Spirit moving them to the work, and blessing them therein. It is not necessary that a man, in order to know he is called of God to the work of the ministry, should see an angel, or outwardly hear a supernatural voice, saying, "Thou art commanded of God to preach;" and yet he may be made to feel as certainly that it is the will of God for him to engage in the work, as Paul did, when he said, "For though I preach the Gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel!" No one would feel a woe upon him for not preaching, unless he was required to preach by more than man's authority. Nor was Paul's a solitary case. Mark informs us that Jesus went up into a mountain, and called unto him whom

he would, that is, he drew them by a secret, heavenly influence, and they came unto him. "And he ordained twelve," or appointed them, "that they should be with him" as witnesses of his life, miracles, sufferings, death, and resurrection, "and that he might send them forth to preach." And what he did then, he does now; only instead of speaking vocally to individuals, he speaks by the still voice of his Spirit to their hearts, and sends them forth to preach. Let no one confound this call to the ministry with a general impression of duty to do good, such as every consistent Christian feels; nor yet with a special impression of duty to do certain other things. Many good men are moved to labor for the Lord in prayer and exhortation, who cannot preach, and consequently are not required to do it by him, though they may be licensed by their brethren. God calls no man to preach, but such as are or may be competent for that work. We must admit this, or acknowledge our inconsistency in supposing he requires impossibility. Still those who can preach usefully as soon as they are called to preach, will, if faithful, preach better when they have experience in the profession. But here we have not time to dwell.

We next remark, on the ministry of Christ, that it is a traveling ministry. It is admitted, that individuals called to this work, may be detained for a season from entering fully upon it, and they may subsequently be hindered in it by circumstances over which they have no control; but all who are properly engaged in the Lord's vineyard, give their whole time and strength to the work, according to the division of it assigned them. We might add, some excellent ministers are called local for distinction's sake, because they are not for the time being in circumstances to engage more fully in the duties of their office, yet they are not local in the strict sense of the word; do not confine their labor to one place, but preach here, there, and yonder, as

they are able. In regard to those who voluntarily engage to spend their life-time in one place, we leave them to settle the account with Him, who said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature," and who enforced the execution of that commission by his own example. We would not speak of Jesus but with the most profound reverence, for we verily believe he was God manifested in the flesh; and it is with such reverence, we say, he was himself an itinerant preacher. He journeyed on foot from place to place to preach the Gospel to all. We will here give one example of his faithfulness in this particular. At Capernaum, a city of Galilee, after he had finished his work, he desired to leave unobserved, that he might not be hindered. "And when it was day he departed, and went into a desert place; and the people sought him, and came unto him, and stayed him, that he should not depart from them. And he said unto them, I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also, for therefore am I sent. And he preached in the synagogues of Galilee."

God's general plan is to save souls by human instrumentality; hence, though Jesus preached himself, he employed the apostles in the same work. Mark says, "And he went round about the villages teaching. And he called unto him the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; * * * and they went out, and preached that men should repent." But what were these among so many: only twelve ministers, when multitudes were to be saved! However, as the work increased, laborers were multiplied; for Luke says, "After these things, the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city, and place, whither he himself would come. Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest." Respecting this statement, several things are

worthy of remark. The Lord sent out his preachers to travel two and two, as the Methodists formerly did, and do yet in some places; and we still believe it is the better plan to have two preachers on one circuit. And he sent them "into every city, and place, whither he himself would come." Wherever there are souls to save, preachers ought to go; and wherever they go to do the Lord's work, there his presence will go with them. Again, we here have laid down the true system for supplying the work with ministers. "The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few." What then, build theological seminaries, and send boys to them whom God never called to the work, and educate them for the ministry? No; "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest;" for he alone can call, commission, qualify, and send men to do his own work. "A word to the wise is sufficient."

So far the commission of the disciples limited their operations to the land of Judea. Jesus had said to them, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." These were to have the first offer of life. But after his resurrection, "Jesus came, and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." In this promise of Jesus, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world," we have laid down the true doctrine of succession. Whoever is called of God to preach, and has his presence with him to bless his labor, whether ordained by bishop, or presbyter, or neither, he belongs to the true apostolic succession. And

other succession than this, professing to reach from the apostles to the present time, we do not recognize. It is neither the subject of our knowledge or belief.

We would further remark, that the Gospel ministry exhibits much variety. It includes, among its subjects, the aged, the middle aged, and the young. We read of Paul the aged, and John the beloved disciple, who out-lived all his colleagues; we also read of the youthful Timothy and Titus; and there was, doubtless, a class of medium age between them. So it was then, is now, and always should be. We need, in the ministry, the wisdom of age, the sprightliness of youth, and the vigor of manhood. And thanks to the Head of the Church, we have them all. Here are our fathers, sons, and brethren associated with us in the blessed work of the ministry.

We have variety in the ministry of the Gospel also as it regards relations in society. It embraces men with and without families. So it was at first. Peter, claimed by the Roman Catholics as the first in the line of popes, was a married man; for when Jesus was at Capernaum, Peter's wife's mother lay sick of a fever, and he went into Peter's house and healed her. There appears to have been some individuals at Corinth who objected to married preachers traveling on account of the expense, for whose sake Paul used this argument: "Have we not power to eat and to drink? Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?" In this declaration, made in the form of question, Paul shows that traveling preachers had power—that is, it was their right to take their families wherever they were appointed to labor, and claim a support for them; and that Cephas or Peter, the brethren of the Lord, namely, James and John his kinsmen, and some other apostles, did so. And who can dispute our right as traveling preachers to do so still? There were probably others who had

no families, and who, being free from encumbrance, could readily go wherever sent. Now, as the first constituted Christian ministry was itinerant, and embraced both married and single men, is it not reasonable to conclude, that such is God's plan still? We are well acquainted with such a ministry, and know the Lord blesses the efforts of that ministry in a glorious manner.

The Gospel ministry exhibits variety as it regards literary attainments. To this qualification of ministers, some people attach more importance than it deserves, and others less than it deserves; but God, whose wisdom is infinite, makes his own selection, without regard to the prejudice of either, so as to meet the real wants of all classes and conditions of society. For the benefit of some, he calls Luke from the medical department, Saul from the profession of the law, and Apollos from the schools of elocution; and to meet the spiritual wants of others, he calls Elisha from the ox plough, Peter from his fishing boat, and Matthew from the receipt of custom, to go and preach the Gospel. But whether from the learned professions, or from the simple avocations of life, those whom God calls to the work, are men of piety and sound minds; and being endued with power from on high, become able ministers of the New Testament, provided they are faithful in all things. Learning is not to be despised or neglected; indeed, it is important to the interest of the Church that some of her ministers should be learned men, so as to carry on the benevolent enterprise of the Gospel, by translating the sacred Scriptures, and otherwise. And the Lord always calls as many such as he needs. But those who make a classical education an indispensable prerequisite to the sacred office in all cases, manifest much ignorance of the holy Scriptures, or great disregard to the divine administration. They have yet to learn what Paul taught the Corinthians on this subject. "But God hath chosen

the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence."

There is also much variety in the Christian ministry as it regards peculiar gifts, as there should be to benefit all classes of hearers. There is perhaps no one subject respecting which men entertain a greater diversity of opinion, than they do as to the best manner of preaching. Our hearers, so far as their preferences on this subject are concerned, may however, be arranged mostly into four classes. The first and least numerous class is made up of those who care for nothing but cold discussion. He who can produce the most logical argument on some abstract principle, is to them the most acceptable preacher. Those of the second class are totally different. Reasoning with them is a dull performance. It answers them no purpose; for they do not understand, or take any interest in it whatever. All they care for is fiery declamation that takes every thing by storm. The most boisterous and vehement preacher suits them best. Whether he be sound or unsound in the faith, competent or incompetent to teach, are with them unimportant considerations; for they appear to estimate his entire qualifications by the strength of his voice, and fluency of his speech. They are apt to judge where there is no noise, there can be but little religion. There is a third class materially different from the first and second classes. It is composed of feeling hearers, partial to weeping prophets. They are not partial to argumentative, or vehement speakers, but to those of the persuasive kind, who operate mostly on the sympathies of the people. Pathetic speakers are very popular, especially on funeral and other solemn occasions. The fourth and last class

of hearers which we shall name, are content with simple explanation of truth, without any striking peculiarity of manner. They are satisfied with the preacher who states clearly the plan of salvation, and defines correctly the path of duty, in an easy and natural tone of voice, and with the appearance of sincerity and self-possession. They are not pleased with a phlegmatic, violent, or affected manner; nor do they relish a display of words or of the flowers of rhetoric. The most they care for is the exposition of religious truth in its native simplicity, which seldom fails to produce a good impression.

It is worthy of remark, that most of our congregations are made up of hearers from all these classes; and hence the difficulty of one preacher suiting the whole. There is probably not one minister in a thousand whose preaching gives universal satisfaction, even among serious and well disposed people, because his manner is not adapted to meet the peculiarities of all hearers. Beside, there are but few, if any, who excel in all things pertaining to the duties of the ministerial office. It has often been observed, no one man can exercise a perfect ministry. To do this, requires all the variety of gifts and graces possessed by the whole body of ministers. Hence, the necessity of constant interchange to meet the wants of all. A truly prosperous state of religion is seldom if ever seen where the people are confined to the preaching of one man for many years together. But all these difficulties are removed or lessened by the practical operation of an itinerant interchanging ministry, whose entire variety of gifts and qualifications pass in review before the same people, and meet the cases of all. They hear alternately the master reasoner, the son of thunder, the son of consolation, and the man of instruction, and each hearer receives his portion of the Gospel provision, keeping up a healthy action in the whole body

ecclesiastic; and the result of the whole is, many run to and fro, and knowledge is increased.

We purpose to show in our final remarks, that this prophecy is rapidly being fulfilled, both as it regards the number of agents employed, and the effects produced. Without intending to disparage pious ministers of other Churches, whom we regard as brethren and co-workers in the Lord's vineyard, we beg leave to refer to our own ministry as an example of the increase of laborers. About one hundred years ago, Mr. Wesley met his first conference, embodying less than a dozen preachers. Now the whole number of traveling preachers in his connection on both sides of the Atlantic, is over five thousand. These are aided by about ten thousand local preachers. Most of these we have reason to believe, both itinerant and local, are truly and successfully engaged in spreading the knowledge of the truth. Now add to our own the ministers of Christ in all denominations, and in all countries, together with institutions of learning, public and private, and all benevolent associations employed in circulating Bibles, tracts, books and religious periodicals, and the many thousands engaged in the missionary and Sabbath school departments, and you can form some general idea of the force brought into requisition, and running to and fro, that knowledge may be increased.

That the knowledge of the truth is rapidly extending, no one can doubt who has eyes to see and ears to hear. This is true as it regards the doctrines of the Gospel. The time was when the doctrines of general redemption and free grace, as preached by us, were considered monstrous by a large proportion of Protestant Churches; but such is the increase of light within one century, that these doctrines are now very generally believed and taught throughout England, Ireland, Canada, and the United States. This change, by affording Christians more liberal views of the

system of salvation, will greatly facilitate the spread of the Gospel among the nations of the earth. Again, it is not very long since no one could profess to know his sins forgiven, by the direct witness of the Spirit, without subjecting himself to the charge of being a fanatic, a hypocrite, or in a state of mental derangement. In some cases, conversion was treated by regular physicians as a paroxysm of insanity, by bleeding, and blistering the head; but without success. A plaster of flies might, for ought we know, draw an inflammation from the brain, but it could not extract religion from the heart. Dr. Hinde, of Virginia, who some years since finished his course at Newport, Ky., was an example. When his wife got converted among the Methodists, he shaved her head and applied a blistering plaster, supposing her to be mentally deranged. However, he soon found out that she was in her right mind, and that he was morally deranged himself; but he applied to the great Physician of souls, and was healed. His conversion occurred at a camp meeting, where the people were affected with the falling exercise, which he insisted was all affectation, and that he could prove it by applying a strong preparation of hartshorn to the nostrils of the fallen subject, and actually went prepared to make an experiment. While conversing with a friend some distance from the stand, an individual came and said, "Doctor, they are falling, they are falling." Dr. Hinde ran with his bottle of hartshorn to make an experiment which should expose the hypocrisy of the prostrated subject; but before he reached the scene of action, he was stricken down by the power of God, like Saul of Tarsus. After agonizing in prayer for some hours, he arose a new creature in Christ, shouting happy; in which state he continued till death.

The work went on in the midst of opposition. Some of the established orders of ministers in the early days of Methodism, manifested great ignorance in regard to

experimental godliness. Many of them, when applied to by awakened persons for counsel, advised them to go into gay company, and drink wine to revive their drooping spirits, and by all means avoid those places where revivals of religion were in progress, to which, under the influence of prejudice, they traced most cases of affliction of mind and body. And some such ministers went so far in their opposition to the work of the Lord among us, as to encourage mobs to rise and put us down by force. These were truly "blind leaders of the blind." But we have much cause of gratitude for a better state of things. A great change has taken place. The revival of God's work since the days of Wesley has extended into most or all of the Protestant Churches, and thousands of witnesses have been raised up among them, who testify from experience that it is the privilege of Christians to know their sins forgiven. Thus, knowledge is increasing. The prophecy in the text is being fulfilled. And we trust the day is not far distant when the knowledge of God shall cover the whole earth, as the waters do the great deep. May the Lord hasten it in his time! Amen.

SERMON XXVIII.

RELIGION.

If a preacher were addressing a congregation for the first time, religion would be a suitable subject, as one of the first importance: if he were addressing them for the last time, it would be suitable, as a subject of the last importance; and if he were addressing them at any time, it would be suitable, as a subject that is always important.

The time was when the Christian religion was the topic of conversation among a few people, and they of the poor and obscure class; but a vast change has taken place in our world in reference to this subject. It has obtained an intro-

duction into every department of society, and is made a subject of interesting conversation in churches, court-houses, colleges, markets, ships, prisons, hospitals, camps, and navies. It calls forth the influence of wealth, learning, and talents; employs the deliberations of conferences, councils, general assemblies, and parliaments; it sweetens all the enjoyments of domestic life, stamps dignity on public acts, and lays the foundation of civil governments; it adorns the youthful character, crowns the gray head with honor, tames the savage disposition of man, builds bulwarks of salvation round unprotected innocence, warms the poet's heart, and inspires the tongue of the orator: it soothes the sorrows of the bereaved, softens the bed of affliction, and points the dying pilgrim to his endless rest.

But after all, what is religion? Cicero says, "The term religion comes from a word which signifies to reconsider, and denotes the diligent study of whatever pertains to the worship of God." Servius says, "Religion comes from a word which means to bind fast, and denotes that obligation which we feel on our minds from the relation in which we stand to a superior power." "With us," says Martindale, "the term religion is used to denote that worship and homage which is due to God, considered as our Creator, Preserver, Benefactor, Redeemer, Savior, Governor, and Judge." All of which, we presume, is well enough in its proper place. Yet as this view of the subject is too extensive for our present purpose, we shall content ourselves with a few observations,

I. On the religion of the head.

II. The religion of the heart.

III. The religion of the life.

I. By the religion of the head, we mean the understanding and belief of the Christian revelation. Do we then understand Christianity, as distinguished from Paganism, Mohammedanism, and all other religions; and taking it as

a whole, do we believe in it as a system of divine truth? If so, then we are right. To be a little more particular, do we understand and believe in this system in all its general and important parts? We ask this, because many who subscribe to the truth of the Gospel as a whole system, when they come to examine its details, reject its more important principles, and thereby virtually reject it altogether; yet they wish to be called Christians, to take away their reproach. Do we subscribe to the doctrine of the Trinity, or three persons in one divine nature? the totally fallen, wholly polluted, and utterly helpless state of man, when considered apart from the grace of God? the atonement made by the sin-offering of Christ? divine influence or agency of the Holy Ghost? repentance and faith, as conditions of salvation? regeneration, or the new birth? obedience, as the fruits of faith? holiness, as an essential qualification for heaven? perseverance, or the necessity of continuing faithful until death? the resurrection of the body? a general judgment? and eternal rewards and punishments? If so, we have what we mean by the religion of the head. So far, we presume, we are generally religious; for who is willing in these days to be called an atheist, a deist, or a sceptic? But unfortunately for many, alas, too many, their religion never proceeds any further; and dying merely orthodox sinners, their souls, we fear, are lost for ever.

II. The religion of the heart.

By this we mean what is commonly called experience, which is a very comprehensive term, embracing several material points which should be well understood. Our Savior said, "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." No one will seek religion who does not feel the need of it; but to feel that need as we should, is half the cure; for when our sense of want drives us to the mercy seat, we are not far from the king-

dom of God. This state of mind is called conviction, and is an affecting, heart-felt sense of our lost and ruined state as sinners, which the Holy Ghost most generally effects by the sword of the Spirit; "for the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." With our hearts thus laid open, and exposed by the light of truth, we begin to cry with anguish, or tremble under a fearful sense of the wrath of a holy God. All we can see is misery, and all we can read is condemnation. The awful thunders of Sinai roll around our defenseless souls; and if left in this condition, we should fall into desperation; but Christ is offered as an all-sufficient Savior; and were we to receive him immediately, we should find speedy relief; we should "have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." But a sight of our guilt usually brings with it unbelief, which stands like a mountain between Christ and our souls; consequently, instead of receiving offered mercy, we set out in our extremity to make ourselves better, but all proves in vain. No penance we can do, or works we can perform, or distress of mind we can suffer, brings relief; nor will any thing, until we come straight to Christ as we are, with all our sins and sorrows, and throw ourselves without reserve on him, who will receive us graciously, and love us freely. You perceive, in our few remarks on conviction, we have taken the term in its largest sense, to denote all those exercises which go before conversion; including, not only the light of truth, and the fear of destruction, but also that penitential grief which softens the heart, encourages hope, and prepares us to surrender ourselves as unworthy and helpless subjects of divine mercy.

The second material point in experimental religion is

conversion, which includes the pardon of sin, changing our relation from a state of guilt to a state of favor, and also a renewal or change of our nature by the Holy Spirit, which takes the things that are Christ's and shows them to us, appropriating them to our case, and making them our own; so that "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." This mighty change, in all the moral dispositions of our nature, is through faith in the merits of the Lord Jesus, and by the influence of the Holy Ghost; and is accompanied with peace of mind, yea peace with God, and likewise with the Spirit of adoption sent forth into our hearts, whereby we cry, "Abba, Father," and producing "joy unspeakable and full of glory."

The religion of the heart includes also what is called sanctification, or perfect love. It is true, however, that conversion is sanctification begun; but because a work is commenced, it does not follow that it is finished. Hence, believers are exhorted to "grow in grace," and to "go on unto perfection;" the necessity of which is found in the fact that a cessation of exertion will be followed by a loss of our "first love," and if persisted in, by a loss of the divine favor altogether; and also in the fact that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord" in peace. No "unclean person" hath any inheritance in the kingdom of God. And we ask the justified believer, if there is not uncleanness or moral pollution remaining in him, such as pride, anger, covetousness, self-will, sensuality, and many unholy affections, neither of which can go to heaven, and all of which must be crucified? Let us not deceive ourselves, when we are converted, we are little children only; hence John says, "I have written to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you." What the infant is to the man, young converts are to perfect Christians. Therefore, "As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word,

that ye may grow thereby," to be "young men," and afterwards "fathers in Israel," so shall we be emptied of sin, and filled with God, and enabled to love him with all the heart, soul, mind, and strength, and our neighbor as ourselves, which is what we mean by sanctification, or Christian perfection.

Having barely time to touch this great subject of perfect love, we would just observe, that it is to be obtained as the former blessing, by simple faith in the blood of Christ, "which cleanseth from all sin," that "faith which works by love, and purifies the heart." When this perfect love is received, it "casteth out all fear that hath torment;" and causes us to "rejoice evermore: pray without ceasing: and in every thing give thanks." It is certain if we had this blessing, we could preach better and hear better, pray better and feel better. May our God and Savior fill us with all his fullness now! We hasten to notice,

III. The religion of the life.

This comprehends obedience to God's commandments. The inward witness of the Spirit is good evidence of a state of grace to ourselves when we feel it, but it is no evidence to our neighbor; he looks for the fruits of conversion in our "manner of life." And in proportion to the greatness of our profession, there must be a correspondent obedience in our lives: if penitents, we are supposed to be reformed from outward and flagrant offenses: if converts, we are expected to lead new lives, though feeble and easily turned out of the narrow path; but if perfect and well established Christians, we are expected to adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things, walking in all the ordinances and commandments of the Lord blameless.

The religion of the life also includes works of charity towards men. Supreme love to God, and universal good will to man, constitute the sum and substance of religion. If we love God, as a natural consequence, we love our

neighbor. If we love God with the whole heart, the consequence is, we love our neighbor as ourselves. And if so, we will find means to express it. James gives us a striking description of pure religion, when he says, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, (the marks of it are these,) To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." In view of this text, we would do well to ask ourselves, if we do good to all men as far as possible, but especially to the friendless and afflicted? does our religion lead us to garrets and cellars, to prisons and hospitals, the chambers of the sick, and cottages of the poor, to open our hearts and hands, and to loose our tongues to instruct the ignorant, and pray for the distressed? If so, our religion is pure.

A Christian must not only do good, but he must "keep himself unspotted from the world," refusing any undue attachment to temporal interests; any familiarity with the society of the world, farther than is strictly necessary to transact lawful business with, and reclaim them from sin and ruin; any conformity to the spirit and foolish fashions of the world; and, in a word, he should live above the world while in it, have the victory over it, using it as not abusing it, and ready to leave it, when called to his better home.

A few words of application, and we shall have done Have we this religion? The answer is, we either have it in whole, or we have it in part, or we have it not at all; one of these must be the true answer in each person's case now present. If we have it not at all, what are our future prospects? We know that we shall soon "die and go the way of all the earth;" and, like Job, say to corruption, "Thou art my father: to the worm, Thou art my mother, and my sister. And where is now my hope?" While we have to claim such kindred for our flesh in the grave, whither will our spirits go? Who will be their com-

panions for ever? Without this religion, all is darkness, misery, and death; but with it, we die to live again, die to be happy for ever and ever.

If we have it in part, let us be thankful, and seek after more. The store of mercy is inexhaustible, and always free. Why should we starve our souls, while in our Father's house there is bread enough and to spare? It is our privilege to have "good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over." He that cannot err said to his ancient people, "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it." O for the heavenly manna now! If we have it in whole, then it remains for us to hold on. We are still in an enemy's land; but "be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life," saith Jesus Christ. What more could we ask? Though we are little and unknown by the world, we are the sons and daughters of a great King, and heavenly mansions and shining crowns of glory await our arrival in the kingdom of God. Hold up your heads ye saints of God, we are almost home. Jordan is quite a narrow stream, which may be passed in a few moments, and then we shall be in heaven. And the moment we set our feet on that delightful shore, all is safe, all is well, all is gained, and gained for ever. So may it be, and to the Triune God shall be all the glory, world without end. Amen.

SERMON XXIX.

A TRUE ISRAELITE.

"Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" John i, 47.

How simple is truth in its form, and how forcible in its operation upon the mind, as exemplified in the subject before us. "Philip findeth Nathaniel," who, in all probability, was he that afterwards was called Bartholomew,

"and saith unto him, We have found him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. And Nathaniel," hearing he was from that obscure village, against the inhabitants whereof he appears to have entertained some objection, "said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see." This was a wise answer, and it appears that Nathaniel took the advice; for the next account we have of him is, "Jesus saw Nathaniel coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" that is, see a true Israelite, in whom there is no deceit. Surprised at such a declaration from one with whom he had no acquaintance, "Nathaniel saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee." If his visit to the fig-tree was to gather fruit, it may be inferred that the Lord takes cognizance of the smallest actions of our lives: if he went there to pray, the Lord was listening, as he always is, to the voice of supplication. However that might be, the testimony which Christ gave him of his omniscience, converted him to the belief that he was the Messiah; for "Nathaniel answered, and said unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel." Before this he only believed in the promise of a Messiah to come, but now he has found him. We shall,

I. Attempt to delineate the character of an Israelite.

The word Israelite is derived from Israel, one of the names of the patriarch Jacob, significant of his religious character. The circumstances under which he received this appellation were of peculiar interest. An unhappy difference existed between him and his brother Esau, on account of which their mother apprehended fears for Jacob's safety, and advised him to flee to the land of her relatives, which he did accordingly. There he formed a connection

in the family of his uncle Laban, with whom he sojourned about twenty years, and then, under the openings of divine Providence, set out to return to the land of his fathers. On his way, with his large family, and numerous herds and flocks, he heard that Esau was coming out with four hundred men to meet him. Supposing that a war of extermination was intended, he, on a certain evening, sent his family and flocks over the brook Jabbok, while he lingered behind to engage in secret prayer, for he knew where his help was; and there wrestled with him a man all night, who, to try his faith still more, by way of reproach, said, "Let me go, for the day breaketh," signifying it was time that he departed to see what had become of the family; but Jacob said, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. And he said unto him. What is thy name? And he said, Jacob. And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God, and with men, and hast prevailed. * * * And he blessed him there." And Jacob said, "I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." Then "the man" with whom he contended all night in prayer, was Jehovah, who delivered him from all his enemies.

We have given this narrative thus full, because it affords a certain clue to our subject, by which we learn an Israelite is one that is a prince, or the son of a king. All true Christians are the sons and daughters of the King of kings, and Lord of lords. "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father," enabling us to say unto God, Our Father. And when we arrive in heaven, we are to sing, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever."

An Israelite is also one that has power with God, that is,

one, who by prayer and faith, can avail himself of God's assistance. Thus, Jacob overcame four hundred men; Elisha, the prophet, made a strong military detachment all prisoners of war, without any destructive implements; Gideon, with a handful of men, who cried, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon," routed the whole Midian army with trumpets, empty pitchers, and torches; and, in a word, by prayer and faith, the mouths of lions have been shut, flames quenched, seas dried, kingdoms subdued; and better still, souls immortal saved from destruction.

An Israelite is likewise one that has power with men, to deter them from evil, and influence them to do right. Let a man's character be well established for piety, and how weighty is his counsel, how influential his example; in most cases, his presence will stop the mouths of the profane, and drive dissipation from the room where he resorts. Let this influence then be exerted in leading lost souls to Christ; so shall we prove ourselves Israelites, having power with men.

Finally, an Israelite is one who prevails; "for as a prince thou hast power with God and men, and hast prevailed" with God in prayer, and conquered or overcome thy enemies. And what is to hinder? If we can, by prayer and faith, avail ourselves of the aid of Heaven and earth, God and men, what difficulties can prove too great for us?

The enemies with whom we have to contend are numerous and strong, but He who is for us is greater than all that can be against us. One of these enemies is the world, a very comprehensive term, embracing every outward thing which stands opposed to a life of holiness. But whether we be annoyed and tempted by its wealth, fashions, customs, society, toils, or persecutions, "this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

Another enemy with which we have to conflict, is called

the flesh, which means the corrupt nature of man, commonly styled "the carnal mind:" hence, it is said, "They that are in the flesh cannot please God;" and again, "If ye live after the flesh ye shall die." This enemy, however, is called by many other names; as "original sin," because it was the first sin, and fruitful source of all the other sins of men: "the old man," on account of its long standing: "the sin of the world," because not peculiar to any, but common to all people: "the carnal mind," because of the sensual influence which it exerts upon us, filling the heart with all evil, even enmity against God. And this is a home enemy, an internal foe, a constant attendant on us wherever we go, and is, therefore, the more troublesome and dangerous.

The next enemy with which we have to contend, is the prince of darkness, a most formidable foe. It has often been asserted by modern sceptics, there is no devil, except our own evil passions; but when it is said, "The devils also believe and tremble," does the apostle mean to say, that our passions believe? "I trow not." As to his origin, it has been asked by infidels in the spirit of captiousness, "Who made the devil?" Our answer is short and easily understood. As God made man, and man made himself a sinner, in like manner God made angels, and some of those angels made themselves devils. The consequence was, as Jude said, "And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." Since that rebellion, these fallen spirits have ever been the sworn enemies of the government of God, and the best interest of man.

But among them there is one principal character emphatically called the devil, whose power is no doubt very considerable, but not unlimited; he is a finite being, and does more by artifice than force. His ordinary character is that

of "a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour;" but when it suits his purpose better, he "transforms himself into an angel of light," at least in appearance, and comes "with all deceivableness of unrighteousness," in search of prey. Perhaps it may be objected, if the devil is not infinite, and omnipresent, how does he manage to tempt so many in all parts of the world? We answer, though he is not infinite, yet he possesses the power of self-transportation with great velocity; for being a spirit, it may be presumed he can fly with the speed of lightning, or of thought. He also has many agents, and sub-agents, under him. The number of fallen angels is vastly great; for in one small fort of them, no larger than the heart of one man, they were heard to say, "Our name is legion, for we are many." Perhaps this was one reason why Dr. Watts said, "They throng the air, and darken heaven." Possibly they are more numerous about us now than the motes that float in the atmosphere. But beside these, every impenitent sinner is arrayed under his sable banner; for to all such Christ says, "Ye are of your father the devil, for his works ye will do." Now, all these the Israelite has to contend with.

But lest we discourage him by the number and character of his enemies, let us inquire for a moment, as we pass along, who are on his side? Every good man and woman on earth, of every name, and every order; they all pray for him and for all men daily, if they are good in the sense of the Gospel. Likewise every glorified spirit in paradise, and every angel in heaven; one of whom slew thousands of Assyrians in one night, and who, with all their power, are ministering spirits, to minister unto those who shall become heirs of salvation. The Triune God himself is for us, and "is greater than all who can be against us." The Father who is our refuge in distress, and "a very present help in time of trouble;" the Holy Ghost, "who maketh intercessions for us," and the Lord Jesus Christ, "the captain

of our salvation made perfect through sufferings," the commander-in-chief of Zion's forces, the general who never lost a battle, are all on our side; and "if God be for us, who can be against us?"

With these advantages, even a feeble soldier may achieve wonders, and prove that "the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong." And though we have to "wrestle not with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers, and spiritual wickedness in high places," yet "we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." What, my brethren, are all the enemies of the cross? Though we have "fightings without and fears within," yet God will "teach our hands to war, and our fingers to fight." "Ah, but in my neighborhood," says one, "there are so many opposed, and so few on the Lord's side." How many opposed, a thousand, or ten thousand? Perhaps not so many. But how many on the Lord's side, one, or two? They are entirely sufficient; for "one shall chase a thousand, and two shall put ten thousand to flight."

Behold! or see! this Israelite prevailing with God in prayer, and consequently, over every difficulty, every enemy; and the last foe which he conquers is death. Feign would Satan alarm him by making death as fearful as possible; but, as in former cases, so in this, all his sufficiency is of Christ; and trusting in him, he "shall not be confounded, but be as Mount Zion, which cannot be moved." Does the enemy whisper in his ear, "The cold grave, the cold grave?" Then his heart responds, "There once the flesh of Jesus lay, and left a long perfume." Does Satan tell him, "Though you have conquered many enemies, yet here is an untried one?" How quickly he responds, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ." How many

have fallen covered with glory, and proclaiming triumph to the last. We give one example. The case of John Randon, a soldier who fell in the battle at Bunker's Hill. He belonged to the British line, and after receiving his death wounds, wrote a letter to his wife in England, which he commences thus: "Before these lines reach you, grim death will have swept me off the stage of life, and filthy reptiles will be feeding on that form once so dear to thee. * * * Yesterday we had a bloody and obstinate fight. * * * I received two balls, and am now so weak with the loss of blood, that I can hardly write these few lines, as the last tribute of my unchanging love to thee. The surgeons inform me that three hours will be the utmost I can survive." And after narrating his voyage, his conversion by the instrumentality of a Methodist soldier, expressing his wishes respecting his business, and giving his dying advice at length to his wife and children, he closed with these memorable words, "More would I say, but life ebbs out apace. My senses cease to perform their office. Bright angels stand around the gory turf on which I lie, ready to escort me to the arms of Jesus. Bending saints reveal my shining crown, and beckon me away. Yea, methinks, my Jesus bids me come. Adieu! adieu! adieu!" and soon expired.

SERMON XXX.

HELL.

1. On *hell*, and words of similar import, whole volumes have been written, employed, principally, in learned criticism: but this must all be passed by for the present; for we only design a plain, brief view of the subject, as set forth in the sacred Scriptures. The word *hell* sometimes means the place of separate spirits generally, whether good

or bad; hence, the soul of Christ was not "left in hell," or the separate state, but returned to the body on the third day. Also, it is figuratively used in reference to the grave; thus, in the 55th Psalm, "Let them go down quick into hell," that is, the grave. But usually hell means the place of future punishment for the wicked. We refer to a few cases. "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God," Psalm ix, 17. If hell here means either the grave or separate state of souls generally, why are the wicked threatened with it more than others, seeing all have to die, and go to eternity? Again, "For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell," Deuteronomy xxxii, 22. Now, supposing the grave to be hell, and the place of the rich man the lower hell, what is "the lowest hell," but the lake of fire and brimstone? Let these two awful cases suffice from the Old Testament, and we will turn to the New. "But whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire," Matthew v, 22; "but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell," Matthew x, 28. In this place we must admit, either that hell is not the grave, or else admit that the soul destroyed therein is not immortal. But this hell is not the grave, it is the place of future punishment; and, therefore, modern Universalism, which teaches that "there is not the least intimation in all the Bible that a sinner shall be punished after he is naturally dead," is not true. Again, "The rich man died, and was buried," Luke xvi. Where? Doubtless, in his grave. What next? "And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments," the eyes of his soul, "and seeth Abraham afar off," as far as heaven is from hell, and called to him for relief, saying, "for I am tormented in this flame." Abraham mentions several considerations, and then says, "And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you, cannot; neither

can they pass to us, that would come from thence." In this passage, it is impossible for Universalists to evade the force of the argument; because, if the hell of the rich man is the grave only, then between the sinner's grave and paradise there is an impassable gulf: if his hell is exclusion from heaven only, then between that state of exclusion and heaven, there is an impassable gulf: if his hell is a guilty conscience, then between it and the kingdom of God, there is an impassable gulf: or if his hell is "the lake of fire," then between that lake and glory, there is an impassable gulf; all of which is after his death and burial. Having shown that there is a hell of torment after death, we now proceed to show,

2. There will be punishment for the wicked after the resurrection. If we succeed here, modern Universalism is false; for it teaches that though many live and die sinners, yet in the resurrection "all will be raised children of God." Christ says, "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation," John v, 28, 29. Here we see the difference between Universalism and the Bible; one teaches that the wicked come forth to the resurrection of purification; the other, that they come forth to the resurrection of damnation. And whether it is better to believe Christ or Universalists, judge ye.

3. There will be punishment for the wicked after the general judgment. "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." Observe, the judgment is after death, not in this life, as some say. And then "the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction

from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power," 2 Thessalonians i, 7, 8, 9. In the 20th chapter of Revelation, there is an awful description of the general judgment, where John saw in a vision the dead, small and great, stand before God, collected from the sea, and from death, the place that contained the body, and from hell, the place that contained their separate spirits, and all whose names were not written in the book of life were cast into the lake of fire. "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

In the 25th chapter of Matthew, the Judge is represented as saying to the wicked, "Depart ye cursed, into everlasting fire." We know that Universalists have tried to explain away this account of the general judgment, by referring the whole transaction recorded in the 24th and 25th chapters of Matthew to the destruction of Jerusalem; but when the judgment takes place, all the nations of the earth are to be gathered before Christ, and divided, the righteous from the wicked. Now, we claim to be a part of one of these nations, and yet we know that we were not present to receive our final doom when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans; and, consequently, we know that this is a mere shift to evade the truth. The sum of all on this point is this, the judgment comes after death and

the resurrection, and the full damnation of the wicked after the judgment; and, of course, not in this world, but in the next.

4. The punishment of the wicked will be for ever. The principal words we have to express endless duration are, ever, for ever, everlasting, for evermore, for ever and ever, eternal, &c.; all of which convey the idea of eternity, or endless duration. Figuratively, these terms are sometimes applied to express limited periods, from which Universalists have tried to explain away all their force in reference to future punishment, defining them thus: for ever, age; for ever and ever, age and ages; everlasting, age lasting, &c. Let us now try these definitions by the word of God. David says, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever," that is, for an age; and where will he go then? Will he be turned out of heaven after an age? Christ says, John iii, 36, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life," that is, age lasting life! Observe, further, these terms apply equally to the righteous and the wicked; hence, we have in the Bible the terms everlasting burnings, and everlasting life; everlasting punishment, and everlasting life; everlasting shame, and everlasting life; eternal fire, and eternal salvation; eternal damnation, and eternal glory. The righteous reign for ever and ever, and the smoke of the torment of the wicked ascendeth for ever and ever. Now, our argument is this: if these, and like passages, do not prove that the punishment of the wicked is without end, neither do they prove that the joys of the righteous are so, seeing the same words are used to express both. And, again, these terms are applied to the being of God himself; thus, Psalm ix, 7, "The Lord shall endure for ever," that is, for an age. "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever," that is, for age and ages. From these, and various other parts of holy Scripture, it

appears that before the Universalists can succeed in establishing the truth of those definitions, which they have been obliged to give to make out their system, they must limit the being of Jehovah, dissolve his throne, and cause his empire to crumble into atoms. Such, indeed, is the tendency of the doctrine, that if it should obtain general belief, then the strongest motive to moral rectitude is gone; I mean the principle which holds us accountable in the next world for what we do in this. Then, too, the foundation of civil government is destroyed; for the witness is no longer, by his oath, bound over to the throne of God: the purifying resurrection sweeps all his perjury away, and makes him a child of God. In a word, do away the system of future rewards and punishments, and the moral government of the universe is subverted. Having briefly shown the certainty of hell torments reserved for the finally impenitent, let us now notice,

5. The nature of them. In point of duration, we have seen that all who are lost are doomed to the same endless perdition; but in point of severity, there will be a material difference; for God will "reward every man according as his works shall be:" and, hence, the degrees of misery spoken of in the Bible. But whatever may be the degrees of its severity, it will be a real punishment, consisting, not only of the loss of every thing desirable, but also a sensible suffering, such as that produced by horrible dungeons, heavy chains, rending pains, burning heats, consuming fires, gnawing worms, and destructive wrath. We know it is said that these are figurative expressions. So they may be, and yet the things represented by them are real. Nearly all language is more or less figurative; but to say they are figurative in such a sense as to deny the real punishments they are intended to explain, would be to bring the charge of insincerity, at least, against Jehovah, their author. When the Bible presents us with the felicities

of heaven under the ideas of rivers and trees, cities and mansions, songs and Sabbaths, &c., we might as well conclude, that, because these are figurative, there are no felicities there, as to suppose that, because the torments of hell are described by figures, there are no such torments. According to the natural import of figurative language, in which the less is referred to for the illustration of the greater, we are authorized to believe, if there are no fields, houses, and cities in heaven, there are other things greater and better; and if there be no chains, fires, worms, &c., in hell, there are other things worse.

6. How many circumstances will tend to heighten their misery. Here we could scarcely sustain the heat of a summer's day without the use of cold water; but there, sinners may cry in vain for a single drop to cool their parched tongues. What would this life be to us, if deprived of all our friends? But in hell the principle of friendship is not known: they are all "hateful and hating one another," dealing in the most cutting reproaches, without a single friend to soothe the troubled mind. How unhappy we feel in the presence of our enemies that seek our injury; but in hell, sinners will be surrounded with the vilest men, and the most furious demons. Some have scarcely courage enough to pass amidst tombs on a dark night, lest they should see some real or supposed spirit; but what will they do when thrown into "outer darkness," amongst fearful spirits, and relentless devils? Amidst other causes of their anguish, observe their self-reproaches. Jesus died to save me, but I refused his grace; the ministers of the Gospel warned me, but I would not hearken; Christians prayed for me, but I was indifferent; the Holy Ghost strove with my heart, but I resisted; my song was, it is time enough yet, but death came unexpectedly; heaven was attainable, but now it is for ever gone; I stayed out of the Church, because it contained some disorderly pro-

fessors with whom I would not be associated, but now they are my companions for ever. To crown all, my misery knows no end. If a million of ages would bring relief, I would live by hope; but O, eternity, eternity, who can fathom thy depths, or who can endure thy tortures? O that I could be as though I never had been, then would I not be tortured with the recollection of the past, nor frighted with the view of the future. But I cannot. I am doomed to linger under the pangs of that death that never, never dies.

In conclusion, we would say, if we have found release from guilt and the fear of hell, we should be thankful, but not indifferent; we are not yet in heaven, and consequently, not past all danger of hell. And if we were, we should still exert ourselves on account of others. Are any here yet unconverted? Recollect you "stand in jeopardy every hour." You may be moral, accomplished, and agreeable, or even in the Church as a seeker, but "except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God;" and, of course, he must be lost for ever. To the more rude and thoughtless amongst us, we would say, think us not angry or hard-hearted, abusive or unkind, because we warn you of your danger. We feel for your condition, and "knowing the terror of the Lord we persuade men." Deists and Universalists may reason hell out of their creeds, but not out of existence. "For Tophet is ordained of old; yea, for the king it is prepared; he hath made it deep and large: the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it." And we pray God, that none of us may ever feel how hot it is.

Finally, it is a matter of gratitude that all of us here are on mercy's side of destruction; that we are yet prisoners of hope; that Christ is yet on the mediatorial seat, pleading the cause of the guilty; that the Holy Spirit yet strives

with us; the Gospel yet sounds forth the news of deliverance; the Christian Sabbath yet waits upon us; and pious people pray for us. Come then, dear fellow sinner, while you may, and yield to be saved by grace. All heaven is ready to rejoice over the returning prodigal. May the Lord in much mercy save us from sin and hell, and crown us in heaven, through Jesus Christ! Amen.

SERMON XXXI.

THE PRIVILEGES AND OBLIGATION OF BELIEVERS.

"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen," Ephesians iii, 20, 21.

The circumstances under which preachers of the Gospel in America are now placed, compared with those of the apostles, form a pleasing contrast. Living under the freest government and in the happiest country under heaven, we scarcely know what persecution means, especially in its legal forms. But Paul, for preaching the Gospel of Christ, was arrested, put in irons and committed to prison. While he wrote this and other epistles from Rome, he was "an ambassador in bonds;" but the word of God was not bound. He could still think, write and pray to profit; and it is possible the Lord suffered his enemies to confine him with special reference to his greater usefulness, by writing for the edification of his people in all future time.

It has been said by some of the most learned divines that ever lived and wrote, that the outline of Paul's prayer for the Ephesians, immediately preceding our text, exceeds in beauty and sublimity, not only all the classics of Greece and Rome, but all other parts of the New Testament. He says, "Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribula-

tions for you, which is your glory. For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God." This is not the revery of a wild and disordered imagination, but the word of truth and soberness. Paul here wrote and prayed as he was moved by the Holy Ghost. The text is a sort of doxology, with which he concludes this inimitable prayer. In the words selected for our present consideration, we are advised,

I. Of our privileges as believers.

The first privilege secured to us, as expressed in the text, is to ask the Lord in prayer for whatsoever we need. And surely this is a great privilege. While in this state of trial, we are exposed to dangers against which none but God can defend us; we have wants which none other can supply, and are liable to affliction, sorrow and misery, from which no other being can relieve us. If we look to our friends for relief in our extremity, it is only to be disappointed, they cannot help us; or if we trust in ourselves, we lean on a broken reed which will pierce our hand, and inflict deeper wounds in our hearts. But God can afford all needful aid. "He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see?" We might add, and he that formed the heart, shall he not feel? Yes, verily; for God says to his people, "Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." Who can describe the consolation of the humble

believer, pouring out the desires of his full soul to God in prayer in the day of tribulation?

It is our privilege to ask for large blessings of "Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." We scarcely know how to comment on such language as this, without marring its beauty and reducing its strength. It reminds us of the words of Jesus to his disciples, "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name," in comparison of what is your privilege: "Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." We may ask for large supplies with full expectation of being heard; for Jesus, to encourage the faith of the disciples, said, "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." Now, seeing it glorifies the Father in the Son to grant us all needful blessings, surely he will not withhold them from us. What greater encouragement could we desire than is here given? Yet our privilege is not limited by our own power of expression. It is true, we can ask much, especially when our hearts are warmed, and our tongues are loosed by the Spirit of grace and supplication; when we have asked for all we can express in words, thought still exceeds our language; and when language and thought both fail, God "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think."

Again, he is as willing to bless us as he is able; otherwise, all the words of promise and encouragement in the text would be useless, worse than useless, they would mock us, by exciting our hopes only to disappoint them. But not so. The Lord is waiting to be gracious. He is not only able and willing to save and bless all who pray in faith, but he encourages us to come and try him, thereby seeking an occasion to do us good. Blessed be God, we have a chartered right to plead the Gospel promises. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." In this

text we have, on condition of confessing our sins to God, the sure promise of a two-fold blessing: forgiveness and purification, or justification and sanctification. All this, however, is through the blood of the Lamb, which alone can wash out the stains of sin. "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." This testimony is complete, and ought to settle the question as to our privilege of full salvation, and we should act in accordance with our privilege. They who suppose that the blood of Jesus can only purify in part here, and that death must finish the work, undervalue that blood which "cleanseth us from all sin." We think that the advocates for inbred sin, for the necessity of believers remaining in sin during life, are very erroneous in their views; and doubtless they are so, according to the sacred Scriptures. Still, we are more inconsistent in our practice than they are in their belief. As Methodists we believe in full salvation from all sin, properly so called, through faith in the blood of Jesus, and yet most of us live without that blessing, and what is still worse, without using any suitable efforts to obtain it. Then out of our own mouths God will judge us at the last day. May the Lord pity our delinquency, and help us now to commence in good earnest to seek the blessing of perfect love!

There is much need of a deeper work of grace in our hearts. The sense of pardon and peace which we occasionally enjoy are satisfactory evidences that, at such times, we are accepted in Christ, and justified freely for his sake from the guilt of past transgressions; but the dark seasons which follow, and the unholy passions which rankle in our hearts, show but too plainly, that we still have the roots of bitterness within us, the remains of the carnal mind, and that we are unfit for heaven. These must all be destroyed, cast out, and our hearts made clean, if we would enjoy

constant communion with God here, or live in his blissful presence hereafter. And let it be remembered, to be saved from all sin, is only the negative part of Christian perfection; the main point is, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God."

All this is to be accomplished "according to the power that worketh in us," or the Holy Spirit's influence, which is the soul or vital principle of religion. They who deny the operation of the Spirit upon the heart of man, virtually deny the existence of all experimental religion. "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away." All religion without the Spirit is a form without the power, a body without a soul, a name without the thing. There never was a soul converted or sanctified without the Spirit, and there never will be. He alone takes of the things that are Christ's and shows them unto us, or applies his benefits to our hearts. There never was a successful preacher whose word was not attended with the Spirit's influence, and there never can be; sinners are dead in trespasses and in sins, and it requires the same power to raise them to spiritual life that raised Christ from the dead. Without the Spirit's influence, we might as well speak to these pillars as to men spiritually dead; but with his attending influence, the ministry of the Gospel works wonders; "for it is the power of God unto salvation unto every one that believeth." The Bible without the Spirit's influence is, to a great extent, a sealed book. "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." The same light in which the revelation of God to man was written, is necessary in order to read it under-

standingly. We allow the written word is the rule of faith and practice, but many things therein spoken of is understood only by the illumination of the Spirit. For example, what does any one know of the witness of the Spirit, of joy in the Holy Ghost, who never felt it? What can any one understand of being "risen with Christ," or of a "life hid with Christ in God," whose heart has never been changed by the Holy Spirit? But to those who have this Spirit, what a glorious system of salvation is revealed in the Bible. We are sinners, but Christ died for us. We are spiritually dead, but by his Spirit, he quickens us unto life. We are dark, lost, in despair of any help in ourselves, but the Gospel, attended with the Spirit of all grace, comes to enlighten, instruct, strengthen, and comfort us. We are depraved, but the blood of Jesus cleanseth us from all sin, and fills us with all the fullness of God, according to the power of the Spirit which worketh in us mightily through faith.

II. All these privileges bring us under obligation to give glory to God.

What a delightful exercise of the mind to render grateful acknowledgments to the Author of all our mercies—an exercise at once pleasing to God, and joyful to ourselves. "Unto him be glory." As to God's inherent, personal glory, it cannot be described, or even comprehended by us. What is called the visible glory of God, means that luminous appearance, or body of brightness, which at sundry times was recognized by his ancient people. That glory appeared to Moses on the mount; it came down on the mercy seat in the temple; descended upon Jesus at the Jordan, and appeared to the disciples on the mount of transfiguration. These, however, are mere reflections from the Sun of righteousness during the night of man's mortality, while a full view of the glory of God is reserved for the saints in heaven. The Lord possesses infinite glory in and

of himself, independently of his creatures, but it is their reasonable service to declare his glory, ascribing to him all wisdom, power, and goodness; and more especially it is our duty, as sinners saved by grace, to acknowledge that he is the source and author of all the good done in us and by us. A true work of grace is never ascribed, by its subject, to himself, or the minister, but to the Lord of all. It is natural for a soul just "born again" to say, "Glory to God;" and as often as he feels the same spirit of holiness and love through after life, he delights to say, "Unto him be glory." Some people think we say it too often and too loud; but if we get to heaven we expect to say it much oftener and much louder there than we do here.

"Unto him be glory in the Church," not the house of worship, but the body of believers assembled in the house. "The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments duly administered according to Christ's ordinance in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same." And as there are many such congregations, the apostles often used the term Churches; but in our text, the word Church is to be understood in the general sense, to embrace all true believers of every age, every nation, and of all denominations of Christians. To the Church we must look for all the glory which is given to God on earth; without the Church, we should soon have no Bible, no ministry, no Sabbath, no true piety, no means of grace; and, consequently, no well founded hope of heaven, and the exercise of praising God would cease among us. That we may have some more definite idea of what the text means, suppose a congregation of spiritual worshipers all in peace and fellowship, all doing their duty, preachers and people, with a revival of religion in progress, in which sinners are awakened and converted, backsliders reclaimed, and believers sanctified. What a scene of glory is here

displayed. This congregation constitutes a true Church. Now suppose the whole number of Christian congregations throughout the world to be in the same prosperous condition, and you have what the text means where it says, "Unto him be glory in the Church." Again, suppose this work to go on till the world is converted, and you have at one general view the object of the glorious enterprise of the Gospel ministry spread out before the mind.

All this work of glory is to be expected "by Christ Jesus." There is no access to the Father, for fallen man, but through the Son. "All things are delivered unto me of my Father; and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." All the blessings of the covenant of grace come down to us through Christ Jesus, and all our acts of worship, whether prayer or praise, must be offered up through him. That sermon, exhortation, prayer, song, or vow, which is offered on the altar of God without any reference to Christ, is not accepted; that proclamation of a governor, president, or king, recommending a day of fasting or thanksgiving to be publicly observed in worshiping assemblies, which makes no reference to the mediation of Christ, is only infidelity in disguise, baptized with the name of religion to take away its reproach. There is nothing in man on account of which he has any right to come into the presence of a holy God; and there can be no acceptable worship offered to him on our part, but "by Christ Jesus," who says expressly, "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

This work of giving glory to God is to go on "throughout all ages," that is, through all successive generations. God changes not. Our duty to him is always substantially the same. Man in all ages is alike depraved, helpless, and dependent. If every man, woman and child now on earth were converted, the next generation would need conversion

as much as we did, and our children and children's children will be brought under the same obligation to praise God that we now are under. The whole system of Gospel salvation will be perpetuated to the latest generations of men. Every thing wears out, except experimental religion, but this never grows old. It has always been the same in its character, influence, and results, whether in the days of the apostles, of the martyrs, of the Reformers, of the Wesleys, or at the present time. It is the same among all nations where it exists at all, of every shade and every language, constituting them children of the Most High; for all true converts to Christ have the Spirit of adoption sent forth into their hearts, whereby they cry, "Abba, Father." And this work of praising God will go on in this world while the sun shines, and water runs; or in the language of the text, "Throughout all ages;" and then "world without end" in heaven, only in more glorious strains. Here the number of spiritual worshipers collected at any one place is comparatively small, but in heaven they form a "great multitude which no man can number." Here we are necessarily in a scattered condition, but there we shall all be together. Here we lose our pious friends, but there we shall find them again. In this world we meet seldom and part soon, but in heaven we shall meet to part no more. Here our religious meetings are short, few and far between, but there it will be our glorious privilege to serve and praise God together,

> "Where congregations ne'er break up,
> And Sabbaths never end;"

and that without weariness of body or mind. "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." So may it be, so it should be, and so it will be. Halleluiah, praise ye the Lord.

SERMON XXXII.

THE GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich," 2 Corinthians viii, 9.

The temporal circumstances of men are vastly different. Some abound in the luxury of wealth, while others suffer all the inconvenience and mortification of abject poverty. It is true, we know but little of the sufferings of the poor in America compared with some foreign countries, both Christian and heathen, especially the latter; but even here may be seen enough to show the contrast in the condition of the two classes. Examples are numerous. A stranger passing the best streets in any of our large cities, and observing the elegant houses, lofty steeples, glittering carriages, and fine apparel displayed around him, might naturally suppose that wealth and luxury abounded among the people generally; but if he would extend his observations a little farther, and learn the true condition of the poor as they live on the alleys, in garrets, cellars, and shantees, without employment, perhaps sick, distressed for rent, half naked, with scarce food enough to sustain life, or fuel to keep them from freezing, his mistake would be at once corrected.

This state of things is not the result of blind chance; nor is it in all cases the result of fraud on one hand, or of idleness and prodigality on the other; divine Providence has much to do with the temporal condition of men, though not in such a manner as to destroy their volition or accountability. We allow that some individuals may obtain their fortune by fraudulent speculation, but it does not stay long with them, for the curse of God is upon them and their estate; but at the same time there is a sense in which the Scripture is true, which says, "Riches are from

the Lord," that is, God bestows wealth as the natural fruit of industry, care, and economy. It is also admitted on the other hand, that the poverty of some people is a just punishment on them for their idleness, extravagance, and dissipation; "For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty; and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags." Still there are many very poor persons and families that cannot be justly charged with either of these faults; their poverty is occasioned by fire, or flood, or sickness, or some other circumstance beyond their control. It is written in the book of Samuel, "The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up." And in this dispensation of his providence may be traced the wisdom and goodness of God, as it affords ample opportunity for the exercise of charity, gratitude, and mutual good feeling of both classes toward each other. Solomon said, "The rich and poor meet together: the Lord is the maker of them all." It is not the will of our heavenly Father that the poor should envy the rich, or the rich despise the poor, but that they should mutually serve each other; one by aiding in the performance of necessary labor, and the other by affording needful support. Jesus said to his disciples, "The poor ye have always with you; but me ye have not always." The time for showing kindness to the Savior in person has passed by, but he has left the poor among us as his representatives, and any favor shown them for his sake, will be acknowledged by him at the last day as if conferred on himself. To such as feed the hungry, clothe the naked, lodge the stranger, and visit the sick, the King will then say, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

By reading the whole argument of the apostle, it will be observed that he was here pleading the cause of the suffering poor, urging those in better condition to the duty of charity, as a proof of the sincerity of their love, and to

encourage them to the performance of it, he referred them, in the language of the text, to the example of the Savior, "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." While speaking for a few minutes on this delightful theme, we shall notice,

I. The character of our glorious Benefactor.

His titles will first claim attention. In a subordinate sense, there are "lords many and gods many," but there is only one true and living God, the creator and preserver of all things, and "our Lord Jesus Christ" is he; for Paul said, "All things were created by him, and for him." All titles of supremacy belong to him. He is "King of kings, and Lord of lords;" "Head over all things to the Church;" "Over all, God blessed for ever." Isaiah calls him, "The mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace." Paul styles him, "The great God, and our Savior Jesus Christ." John speaks of him as "the true God, and eternal life." Jude pronounces him to be "the only wise God our Savior;" and Christ, in the first chapter of Revelation, calls himself, "the Almighty." We may conclude our references on this point in the language of Paul to Timothy, "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory for ever and ever."

The next title in the text by which he is designated is Jesus, which means Savior. The angel said to Joseph, concerning Mary, "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins." Yes, he shall save his believing people from the guilt, power, love, pollution and misery of sin; for he is the one mighty to save, and strong to redeem. Jesus is the name which is above every name, the sweetest name that mortals ever heard, the sound of which is suf-

ficient to make sinners weep and saints rejoice. Well may we sing,

"Jesus!—the Name that charms our fears,
That bids our sorrows cease;
'Tis music in the sinner's ears,
'Tis life, and health, and peace.

He breaks the power of cancell'd sin,
He sets the prisoner free;
His blood can make the foulest clean;
His blood avail'd for me."

He is also in the text called Christ, which signifies the anointed of the Father, the promised Messiah, the desire of all nations. He was "anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows," that is, with the Holy Ghost as man was never anointed, to be our Prophet, Priest, and King, to teach, atone for, and rule over us. He was "the immortal Son of God, the mortal son of man," and the only mediator between God and man. It was not by accident, or human fancy, that the object of the Christian's faith was called "our Lord Jesus Christ." Paul here spake as he was moved by the Holy Ghost, for the purpose of presenting his whole character as God, man, mediator to the mind at one general view, that we might believe in him unto salvation.

The next point in order of the subject is the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, as exhibited in the work of man's redemption. In this stupendous act of mercy is manifested the unbounded benevolence and goodness of God. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Jesus truly said, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends;" but the love of our Savior is far greater, for he laid down his life for his enemies. "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us;" yea, "for when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the

ungodly." From this testimony, it is evident, that those for whom Jesus laid down his life were not loyal subjects, obedient servants, affectionate children, or faithful friends, but ungodly sinners. He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance: he came to seek and to save that which was lost, not to benefit himself, but to impart life and happiness to them.

Our Lord Jesus Christ had no occasion to extend his dominions, and increase his subjects by redeeming rebel man, on his own account; for he was rich in a more important sense than the term applies to any creature. To speak of the riches of man is an easy matter, his wealth consists of money and property, which are things seen and understood, and the value of them may be ascertained; but who can estimate the estate of the Son of God? The gold and silver are his, he made and owns the mines whence they come; the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof, and the cattle upon a thousand hills; all souls are his, for he created them; his dominions are to the ends of the earth, and beyond them, embracing all space, all substance, all intelligent beings as his subjects, and among others the shining ranks of angels, those sons of God that shouted for joy when the foundations of the earth were laid. But what is all his estate in material things, and in living creatures, compared to his personal, inherent glory, which illuminates "the abode of angels and God." He is the source of all perfection, all light, life, power, purity, and consolation; insomuch, that when he was about to leave the earth and return to his holy heaven, the sum of all he asked was, to be glorified with that glory which he had with the Father before the world was.

Yet all this was not too much for him to forego in order to save miserable sinners from endless destruction; "Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor." The idea here suggested is not that he ceased to be what he was,

but that he became what he was not. He was God before, and never could cease to be God; but he became man also, took not on him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham; was sent "in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." Thus, he emptied himself of the divine fullness, or concealed under the cover of humanity the effulgence of his glory, and became "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." The incarnation and humiliation of Christ is beautifully and forcibly expressed by the apostle in these words: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

It is clear from the sacred Scriptures, that the Son of God not only took our nature, but also our circumstances in humble life; he said, "I am among you as one that serveth." Let it be here remembered that our Lord served, not among kings, but fishermen, depriving himself not only of the luxuries, but many of the comforts of life. Though in one sense, already explained, he owned the universe, yet as man he claimed nothing, held no property among men, no land, no house, or personal effects, not so much as an animal to carry him, for he journeyed on foot from place to place to preach the Gospel to the poor. On one occasion he said, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." Often was he wet and weary, cold and hungry, or hot and thirsty, a houseless, homeless, friendless wanderer. But he had opposition and persecution in abundance, his enemies vilified and mocked, blasphemed and stoned him, so that the prophet said, "His visage was

so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men." This opposition was not confined to the vulgar classes of men, the rulers conducted him through the formalities of a mock trial, and condemned him without cause. They then scourged him with rugged whips, until the ploughers ploughed long furrows in his flesh. Next, they blindfolded him, then smote him with the fist of wickedness, and said, prophesy unto us who it was that smote thee. Moreover, they clothed him in scarlet, crowned him with thorns, put a reed in his hand for a sceptre, bowed the knee in mock worship before him, and said, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and again resorted to spitting, smiting, and other indignities upon his person. Finally, he suffered at their hands the excruciating death of crucifixion, attended with such severity of pain as caused all nature to feel. The solid rocks were rent asunder, the graves were opened, and the repose of the dead was broken, the heavens above were shrouded in darkness, and the earth trembled beneath the feet of its guilty inhabitants, while Jesus said, "It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost."

But all this, be it remembered, was voluntarily submitted to on his part. His enemies had no power over him, except what was given them from above. Jesus said expressly, "I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again;" which was abundantly established by his resurrection. Christ was God manifested in the flesh to destroy the works of the devil. While his enemies were inflicting insult and torture upon him, had he been disposed, with one frown, he could have sunk them all to hell in a moment; but instead of that, he chose to say, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." With one exertion of his almighty power, he could have dashed the earth to atoms, as easily as he spake it into being; but

he came not to destroy the world, but to save its guilty inhabitants. The object of his suffering and death was foretold by the prophet Isaiah. "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

When he was dead, there was no estate left to be administered on; he had nothing but the garments he wore. These the soldiers divided among themselves; and for his vesture, or robe, they cast lots. There was nothing left with which to pay funeral expenses in whole or in part. His shroud and sepulchre were furnished gratuitously by Joseph, a disciple of Christ, and member of the Jewish council. Now, from this brief outline may be gathered something of the meaning of the words before us, "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor." Such is our glorious Benefactor.

II. The benefits which he confers.

It is proper to notice here the character entitled to the benefaction. Such as trust in Christ only for salvation, and manifest their faith by suitable obedience, or such as can truly and from heart-felt experience call him "our Lord Jesus Christ." You may admire him as the Redeemer of men, as the Friend of sinners and Savior of the world, but do ye love him as your Savior? Do ye believe in him with the heart unto righteousness? We cannot reasonably or Scripturally expect to be the heirs of Christ, unless we

become his children. Paul says, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs: heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."

To those who fill the above character, the promise in the text is, "That ye through his poverty might be rich." Here again the two-fold character of our benefactor as God and man is indirectly brought to view. By no possible rule of ordinary business transaction, could the poverty of one man make another man rich, for the stream can rise no higher than the fountain. And if Christ were a mere creature, his poverty could enrich no one in any proper or important sense of the term. But he is "Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us;" and his poverty, as expressed in the text, means his voluntary humiliation, suffering, and death, as the great sacrificial offering for the sins of the whole world. Again, this promise to make us rich, implies our own poverty. Without the free, unmerited grace of Christ, we have nothing but sin and poverty, we are "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked;" of course the blessing promised in the text is essential to our present and everlasting welfare.

In what sense believers in Christ become rich may be learned in the epistle of James. "Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?" From this testimony, it appears, that the riches which God's people obtain through Christ's poverty, are the riches of faith, not of things that perish, but of a more "enduring substance." What a fortune is here offered to us, without money and without price. The riches of faith include the Gospel with all its privileges, the Christian Church with all her ordinances, and the fellowship of saints with all its consolations. Truly, the

lines have fallen to us in pleasant places, and the Lord hath appointed to us a goodly heritage; for we live in a land of Bibles, a land of Churches, a land of Sabbaths, and a land of revivals.

Again, the riches of faith comprehend experimental religion. This is the "pearl of great price," over which the owner and possessor of it may truly rejoice. It is a treasure which imparts "joy unspeakable and full of glory." It satisfies our most enlarged desires, is imperishable, and will be available when all things else shall fail to administer consolation. It is a treasure which time cannot waste, moth and rust cannot corrupt, thieves cannot break through and steal, fire cannot burn, water cannot overpower, and death itself cannot destroy. Those who enjoy experimental religion, and are careful not to cast away their confidence, have a treasure laid up in heaven, a bank that never fails, whose charter never expires, and which never suspends specie payments. Every Gospel promise is a check on that bank, and whenever indorsed by the Spirit, and presented by the prayer of faith, will draw the specie, not the gold that perishes, but the "gold tried in the fire;" that is, the love of God, which is sweeter than life, and stronger than death.

Finally, the riches of faith include the kingdom of glory. This world is not our permanent place of abode, and we have much reason to be glad of it; for it is polluted with sin, and devoted to destruction. The decree has long since passed in the court of heaven, and will be executed in due time, that this terrestrial habitation of fallen man shall be destroyed by fire. "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all

holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." The new heavens and the new earth are the kingdom which God hath promised to them that love him, and that kingdom will be their final home. Surely those who receive that kingdom will be rich enough. Do we consider a man wealthy who has gold in abundance? There the streets are paved with it. Would we think a man rich who should own the city of Cincinnati? What is this city compared to the New Jerusalem, with its twelve gates and twelve foundations of precious stones, its spacious streets and broad rivers, ornamented with thrones of ivory, shaded with the tree of life, populated by countless myriads of redeemed and happy spirits, and the whole illuminated by the eternal splendors of the Son of God. Now, all this, and ten thousand times more than we can describe, shall be the certain inheritance of every faithful child of God. "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."

In conclusion, we would add a few words for the benefit of those who are yet strangers to "the unsearchable riches of Christ." The love of wealth is one of the strongest passions of the human heart. To gain the riches that perish, men will plan and toil, late and early. They will make land tours and sea voyages, at the sacrifice of ease, of home and friends, and at the risk of health and life. And after all, only a few of them succeed; and such as are successful, hold their estates by an uncertain tenure, and that for only a short period, when death comes and takes them out of the world as poor as they came into it; "For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can

carry nothing out." But there is a well-tried plan by which you can, in a short time, secure a fortune that will last for ever. The Gospel market is now open, and free to every child of man. Here are "the true riches," and they can be obtained on easy terms. Grace makes no hard condition. It is only to look and live, believe and be saved The poor can come as well as the rich. The Lord said by the prophet Isaiah, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labor for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness."

SERMON XXXIII.

FAITH IN CHRIST.

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also," John xiv, 1, 2, 3.

Jesus spake these words to comfort his disciples when they were greatly troubled. The immediate cause of their distress was the intelligence which they had just received from himself, that he was about to leave them, which he communicated in the following terms: "Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me; and, as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come, so now I say to you." By this declaration they understood him correctly to signify, that he was about to depart out of this world, on account of which sorrow filled their hearts. But the tender-hearted Savior proceeded to administer to their wounded spirits the cordial in the text, the

purport of which is: Little children, let not your heart be troubled on account of my leaving you: as ye believe in the Father, believe also in me his Son, and your Savior, and ye shall not be disappointed. Though I leave you now, it is for your benefit, to prepare a place for you, and when that is done, I will in due time return and take you to my Father's house, that ye may be with me, and for ever behold my glory. From these most impressive and consolatory words of our Lord and Savior, we shall raise and endeavor to sustain the following general propositions:

I. They who are destitute of saving faith in Christ are unhappy.

II. They who have saving faith in Christ are comforted.

III. To such as have and retain this faith, a glorious inheritance is promised.

I. Our remarks apply to those who have arisen to years of understanding and accountability, and live in a Gospel land. With this qualification, we say, that all they who are destitute of saving faith in Christ, whatever else they may believe, or do, are unhappy. Belief in one true and living God, without an interest in his Son, does not, and cannot make any individual happy; and for the following, amongst other reasons: They who believe in God in any intelligent or important sense, found that belief on the revelation that he has made of himself to man, which is the only satisfactory means of information respecting his name and character. Consequently, they allow him to be what the Bible teaches, not only a God of wisdom, mercy, love, and long-suffering goodness, but also a God of power, justice, holiness, and truth; or as he proclaimed himself to Moses, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty." This last view of the divine character, that he will by no means

clear the guilty, is what kills the joy, and blasts the hope of the impenitent sinner. James said, "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble." Now, as belief in one God, without an interest in his Son, makes devils tremble, so may it cause sinners to tremble, but cannot make them happy.

So unhappy are men under the influence of that infidelity, which admits the existence of a Great First Cause, but rejects Christ and his salvation, that many of them have sought relief in a summary way, by denying the existence of any Supreme Being. Strange as it may appear, it is nevertheless true, that even in this Christian country and this Gospel day, men have acted the part of David's fool, who "said in his heart, There is no God." This system, however, has its difficulties, no less than the one above named. It is difficult, if not impossible, for men to become established in the belief that there is no God; for in whatever direction they turn their eyes, they behold the certain indications of his infinite wisdom, power, and goodness. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handy work. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world." But suppose, for argument's sake, that they could establish themselves firmly in the notion, that there is no God, it would not afford the desired relief. Is there any consolation in the thought that there is no Supreme Being, and consequently in the supposition that the world came by chance, that the universe was organized by accident, and that hitherto it has been perpetuated only by blind fatality? Certainly not. What security have they, who deny the existence of God, that winter and summer, spring and autumn, seed time and harvest, day and night, will continue in regular succession,

or that the universe will not break into confusion, and end in destruction? He alone appoints and regulates "the times and the seasons." And, beside all this, when we have admitted that there is no God, then to be consistent, and carry out the doctrine, we must admit much more: like the ancient Sadducees, and the modern materialists, we must deny the existence of angels and spirits, the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body, and the whole doctrine of man's future state; and, consequently, that when we die and return to dust, that is the end of our entire history: we shall have no conscious existence, will know no being in the universe, and no being will have knowledge of us: our present existence will become a perfect blank, as though we never had been. Now, to a rational, intelligent mind, this idea of sinking into non-existence, is perhaps the most terrific thought that can be entertained, except that of lying down in everlasting sorrow, where hope never comes. Hence, infidelity, whether in the form of deism or atheism, leaves its votaries and subjects unhappy.

Again, the orthodox sinner, who professes to believe all the principles and precepts of Christianity, but practices none of them, is, if possible, more miserable than his sceptical neighbor, because his own principles condemn him. He professes to believe in God, the creator and ruler of the universe, but does not admit the right of that God to govern him. On the contrary, all his actions virtually say, as did the wicked in Job's day, "What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?" He admits himself to be a poor sinner, but infers nothing from that fact, only that he is thereby excused for neglecting all his religious duties. He professes to believe in Christ as the friend of sinners, and Savior of the world, yet he will not have him for his Savior. He admits that, "Except a man be born again,

he cannot see the kingdom of God," and yet he is content to remain an unregenerate child of nature. He allows, also, that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord" in peace, still he lives in sin. He believes, he says, in a general judgment, where the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed, but makes no preparation for that awful scrutiny. He believes there is a heaven of endless joys for the righteous, but uses no effort to obtain it; and he allows there is a hell of endless torments for the wicked, but makes no exertion to escape it. Hence, out of his own mouth, God will judge him. And now we ask how much better off is this orthodox sinner, so far as present happiness, or a prospect of future bliss is concerned, than the deist or atheist? Nay, in one view of the subject, at least, his condition is worse: that is, his professed belief leaves him without the shadow of an excuse. Let him hear the words of Jesus, "And that servant which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes."

However miserable men render themselves by sin and the willful rejection of the Savior, they all desire, and seek to be happy; but, unfortunately, their depravity leads them in the wrong direction. They are willing to travel every road in pursuit of felicity, except the only one which leads to it: that is, the way of holiness, which is open to such, and only such as believe in Christ with a heart unto righteousness. Some seek happiness in the pursuit of wealth. "But they that will be rich, fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition." Others seek happiness in the pleasures of the world, so called, resorting to theatres, horse-races, and dancing parties; having recourse also to cards, excursions of pleasure, and places of fashionable dissipation; but the result of the whole is, "Vanity and vexation of spirit." Ignorant and vitiated minds may feed

on such husks as these, but they afford no mental nourishment to intelligent and virtuous people, much less to such as fear God and strive to work righteousness. When the irreligious have tried these means and all others in their reach, except the right one, without success, and still feel unhappy, they frequently commence a course of vain wishing. Some wish for political distinction, and others for retirement; one for the bustle of the city, and another for the silence of the desert; one longs to travel, and another to rest. When they allow themselves to think of death and futurity, one wishes to live as long as life can be enjoyed, and then to die suddenly and unexpectedly; while another prefers to die of slow consumption, that he may not be, without due notice and time for preparation, hurried before the Judge of all the earth. One wishes that he had been born among heathens, and not held accountable for the abuse of Gospel privileges; and another in his extremity wishes that he had never been born. Now, what do all these plans, experiments, and vain wishes of those who reject the Gospel amount to, but a practical comment on the words of the prophet Isaiah? "But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." Thus, it is evident to all who look into the subject, that they who are destitute of saving faith in Christ are unhappy.

II. They who have saving faith in him are comforted.

By saving faith in Christ, we mean that faith which receives him in all his offices, especially as mediator, and that trusts in him without reserve, as our only and all-sufficient Savior, for present pardon and everlasting life. It is "the faith of the operation of God," by which the apostle means the faith which can be exerted only under the Spirit's influence. Paul prayed for the Thessalonians that God would count them worthy of being called home at the

appearance of Christ; and to that end, that he would fulfill in them all the good pleasure of his goodness, "and the work of faith with power." We know that men can yield a cold assent to the abstract truths of the Gospel from the force of external evidence, without any special divine influence; but that assent neither changes the heart nor reforms the life. The faith which saves the soul, is of the operation of God, and by him fulfilled with power; and, consequently, that faith is not of ourselves, but is the gift of God. "For by grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." It does not follow, that because saving faith is the gift of God, we can innocently remain in unbelief. He is ready to bestow that gift on all who sincerely ask for it, and use the means of grace. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

This general view of the subject of saving faith in Christ, is sustained by his own words in the context. "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." Jesus is the way of salvation, the truth of the promises to believers, as well as the substance of all the types and shadows of the old dispensation, and he is the life of the soul. When we consider Jesus as the way of salvation, there is one point to be kept prominently and constantly in view; namely, that his sacrificial death as God, man, mediator, is the only possible ground of the sinner's hope, that in him alone "we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." He says himself, "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me." When we consider him as the truth, he must be regarded as the great antitype, or real substance, to which all the types and shadows of the old dispensation referred, and in whom they were fulfilled, "Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in

ordinances." He must also be regarded as the truth of all the "exceeding great and precious promises" of the Gospel to believers. Paul says, "He is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises," or promises of more glorious things than those of the old covenant. These better promises made in Christ to the believer are direct and certain. "For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us." On these we should rely with the utmost confidence; for "what his mouth, in truth hath said, his own almighty hand shall do." And when we consider him as the life, he must be regarded as the author of spiritual life. Paul said to the Ephesians, "And you hath he quickened, (brought to life,) who were dead in trespasses and sins." The same is true of all who have saving faith, being "dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." This doctrine of spiritual life through faith in Christ, was beautifully expressed by Paul, as realized in his own experience. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." To sum all up here in a few words, they who believe in Jesus as the way of salvation are saved; they have a present salvation from the guilt, power, and misery of sin: they who believe in him as the truth, have the evidence that they are saved, the direct witness of the Spirit: and they who believe in him as the life, have that principle of grace implanted in the heart, which, if properly cultivated, will result in an eternal life in heaven; for Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life."

They who have this faith in lively exercise, are greatly comforted; they have consolation to which the natural man is a stranger. Paul prayed that the brethren might be

filled "with all joy and peace in believing." When Peter describes the consolation of believing in Christ, he uses strong words, yet not stronger than true. "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." No comment on this text is necessary for those who enjoy heart-felt religion, because they understand it experimentally; and to those who never felt that religion, a full explanation by us is impossible; for it is "joy unspeakable," or indescribable, and this must be our apology for not explaining it better. "I wish," says an unregenerate hearer, "the preacher would tell me exactly how a soul feels when first converted, and explain precisely how the believer feels when he has 'joy in the Holy Ghost.'" We beg to be excused. It cannot be done.

> "Tongue cannot express the sweet comfort and peace,
> Of a soul in its earliest love."

And if he hold fast the beginning of his confidence, what follows, is "joy unspeakable, and full of glory." But because we cannot explain the "exceeding great joy" of the believer to the understanding of the natural man, it is not therefore to be inferred that it is all imaginary. As well might a blind man doubt the distinction of colors, because he cannot discern the difference between blue and red, as for the unregenerate man to doubt the existence of heart-felt religion, because he cannot comprehend its operations, and feel its consolations. Every individual that is converted, and possesses saving faith, feels and knows it; but plain as it is to himself, he cannot explain it to those who have eyes but cannot see, ears but cannot hear, and a heart but cannot understand. This doctrine is clearly and forcibly stated by Paul to the Corinthians in these words: "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things

which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." The substance of the apostle's testimony is briefly this: While God, by his Spirit, reveals in the believer's heart the consolations of saving grace, the natural man comprehends them not, which accords perfectly with the testimony of David. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will show them his covenant." As they who never ate honey know not its sweetness, so they who are strangers to grace understand not its consolations, which are like honey from the rock, "Sweeter also than honey and the honey comb." But ye may all obtain a saving knowledge of "the things of God" as we did, by prayer and supplication in the name of Jesus, nothing doubting: when the Lord, by his Spirit, answers for himself, then will ye know more of experimental religion in one day, than we could tell you in a life-time. We close our remarks on this point in the language of the Psalmist, "O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him."

III. To those who have and retain the faith of Christ, a glorious inheritance is promised.

If required to explain what that inheritance is in the fewest and most general terms, we would say, an ever-

lasting home in heaven. However, we shall avail ourselves of the suggestions in the text, and show, first, that heaven is not a state or condition merely, but a place. In doing this, we have no need of speculation; the fact is sufficiently plain on the face of the text, both by declaration and promise. Jesus says, "I go to prepare a place for you;" and he calls things by their right names. The same thing is plainly implied in the promise: "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

The figures employed by the inspired writers to explain heaven authorize the conclusion that it is a place, or local habitation. For example, heaven is compared to a house: "In my Father's house are many mansions," said Jesus. Paul used the same figure, when he said to the Corinthians, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

Heaven is also called a "city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." There is a full and glowing description of this city in the book of Revelation, from which we learn that it is twelve thousand furlongs, or fifteen hundred miles square, the length, width, and height thereof being equal; that it hath a wall great and high, resting on twelve foundations of every variety of precious stones; that it is entered by twelve gates of pearl, three on either side, "and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass." * * * "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." Now, this city, let it be observed, is only the metropolis of our Father's empire.

Again, heaven is called a country. The apostle, after describing Abraham and his posterity, who by faith sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country,

says, "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them affar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city." After all we have seen, heard, and read of new and old countries, we believe heaven is the best country in the universe; and it is difficult to understand why all the people are not inclined to seek a home in that promised land. If we were authorized to make proclamation here to-day in good faith, under sanction of the President's seal, that beyond the Mississippi there is a very extensive reservation of rich land, which brings forth spontaneously all the comforts of life, where the climate is always mild, pleasant, and healthy, where the people reside in perfect peace and pleasure, without war or litigation, toil or sickness, and live to be as old as the patriarchs before the flood, and that every individual who will emigrate to that country shall receive, gratuitously, an ample inheritance, would we not all be inclined to go? Certainly. Well then, the ambassadors of Christ are authorized, by a commission from the court of heaven, under the broad seal of the Holy Ghost, to make proclamation here constantly of a far better country than the one above described, which lies just across the Jordan of death, in the peaceful dominions of the King of kings, where we are all invited without money and without price, "to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time." That

country is already peopled by happy millions; still there is room enough and to spare. Many of our best friends are there, waiting our arrival. Others are daily embarking for the port of endless life. Here are some who just begin to think seriously of quitting this land of sin and sorrow, and removing to the upper and better country. Others have actually sold out, and are now on the way. Come, fellow sinner, and go with us, we are journeying to the promised land, and soon we expect to see the King in his beauty, and the land that is very far off.

Perhaps ye would wish to hear some farther particulars of the place. Is the heavenly country situated in a pleasant climate? We are authorized to say there are no extremes of heat or cold, wet or dry seasons, or blasted harvests in that country. "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat." Is it a well-watered country? "And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." This fountain which breaks from the Rock of ages, deep, and broad, and clear, to water the whole city and surrounding country, not only supersedes thirst, but is the "water of life." Is it a fruitful country? "In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." Several distinct ideas are here embodied. The fruit is abundant everywhere, and accessible to all "on either side of the river:" it affords variety, "twelve manner of fruits:" the supply is certain and constant, "every month:" and, finally, the tree on which it grows can never die, it is "the tree of life." Does the heavenly country afford good society? "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are

written in the Lamb's book of life." Of course, there will be no unhallowed passions to rankle in the bosom of any individual, where none but "the pure in heart" are admitted; there will be no family broils, neighborhood contentions, angry litigation, lawless mobs, or bloody war, but all will be calm, peaceful, and happy for ever. Is it a healthy country? We answer in the language of Isaiah, "The inhabitants shall not say, I am sick." No hollow cough or hectic glow, no racking pain or burning fever, or any other disease will ever prey upon the citizens of heaven. Are the people of that country long-lived? They live for ever. Death, in that region, is an eternal stranger, and the evils which produce death, and the sorrows consequent upon its ravages, are also excluded. "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

Moreover, when we arrive in that country we shall find habitations fitted up for our reception. In this world we can have houses, provided we have money to buy or build them; but there, whether rich or poor, we shall all find splendid apartments ready for our use. Jesus says, "I go to prepare a place for you," for all his disciples. And a glorious place it will be; for he says, "In my Father's house are many mansions," habitations of kings. The building occupied by a common citizen, we call house; but that occupied by a president or king, we call mansion. Are we experimental and practical Christians? Then we belong to the royal family of heaven. Our Father is the King of kings, and Lord of lords; and in his house "are many mansions," suited to the dignity of his children. There the Christian, now a pilgrim and a stranger on earth, as all his fathers were, will find his everlasting home. The mere thought of getting there, to mingle with all his Father's children, often causes him to hold up his head and

rejoice. While the wealthy of this world enjoy their costly habitations, he, though as poor as his Master before him was, can turn his eyes toward heaven and sing,

"Yonder's my house and portion fair,
My treasure and my heart are there,
And my abiding home;
For me my elder brethren stay,
And angels beckon me away,
And Jesus bids me come."

Does unbelief arise in any heart, and suggest we are very far from our Father's house, in a howling wilderness, and between us and our destined home rolls the dismal gulf of death, and how are we to get there? Never mind, Jesus will see to that. He says, "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." Please observe our blessed Savior has promised, not to send, but to come for us. The distinction is all-important to Christians. If Jesus only were to send for us, we should have to pass the dreary vale of death without him; but if he come for us, then will he return with us. Did not David mean this much, when he said, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me?" We are formed for sympathy. When we get sick for the last time, especially if at home among our friends, there will doubtless be as much feeling on the occasion as is necessary. The progress of disease will be observed with intense and increasing anxiety by those who shall around our beds their watchful vigils keep; with much affection they will wipe the cold sweat of death from our face, and hold the cordial to our quivering lips for the last time. Thus loth to part, they will go with us down to the margin of the river of death, and would accompany us farther if they could; but here we must bid adieu to wives and husbands, parents and children, brothers and

sisters, ministers and physicians, friends and neighbors, and proceed alone, and yet, thank God, not alone, for Jesus will go with us all the way through. And shall we fear to follow where Jesus leads the way? No; he has conquered all our enemies, and death the latest foe to man; and now, faithful to his last promise, he comes again to receive us to himself, and lead us with songs of deliverance to our Father's house. All our needless fears will then leave us; all supposed obstructions and difficulties are nothing with him, "who maketh the clouds his chariot: who walketh upon the wings of the wind." When we step on the chariot of salvation, and wave a peaceful and final farewell to all sublunary things, the upward attraction of love will be too strong for the power of gravitation, and rising from the earth with Jesus, amidst a shining convoy of angels, our last militant song may be,

"Sink down, ye separating hills,
Let sin and death remove;
'Tis love that drives my chariot wheels,
And death must yield to love."

Our homeward flight will be more rapid than that of a sun-beam. Scarcely shall we have lost sight of these mundane shores, till we shall behold the glory of the heavenly city. Scarcely shall we have ceased to hear the groans and conflicts of earth, till our souls will be fired with the shouts of angels, and the songs of the redeemed in heaven. Scarcely shall we have finished taking leave of our friends on earth, till we shall be greeted by our friends in heaven, and made welcome to the everlasting habitations which Jesus has prepared for us; that where he is, there we may be also, to behold his glory. Amen.

THE END.